

Amateur Photographer

**Monster
Nikon!**

We field test the huge new Nikkor 600mm f/4

Passionate about photography since 1884

Double take

How **Erik Johansson** achieves his amazing Photoshop compositions



Red deer

Tips for photographing this majestic British beast



Laowa 60mm f/2.8 Macro

A 2:1 magnification lens for £300 – is it too good to be true?

Perfect waterfalls

Jeremy Walker reveals the secrets of shooting these natural wonders

Focal length: 70mm · Exposure: F/11, 1/160 sec



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* For high-speed standard zoom lens compatible with full-frame SLR cameras.
Current as of February 2012. (Source: Tamron)

** The Sony mount does not include the VC image stabilizer
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While many photographers have a fixation with pixel counts or other dazzling new features, the humble lens can often be overlooked. However, if anything, the lens is even more important than the camera it is mounted on. A lens is key to how we make our images, and our decision as to what lens to use can change the way our images look. That is why I love lenses – old ones, new ones, flawed ones – each one is different, and even those that aren't perfect

7days

A week in photography

can produce great images. You have to learn how to use them just as you would a camera.

In this issue we review two very different lenses. We see what the professional wildlife and sports photographers will be using for years to come with Michael Topham's experiences of the Nikkor 600mm f/4 (page 44), a lens that costs as much as a new car. Andy Westlake then gets up close with the incredible Laowa 60mm f/2.8 macro lens that offers 2:1 reproduction for just £300 (page 49). **Richard Sibley, deputy editor**

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ONLINE PICTURE OF THE WEEK

© MARTIN COOPER

Anyone for fishing?

by Martin Cooper
Canon EOS 5D, 70-200mm, 1/30sec at f/14, ISO 100

This near-abstract shot comes from Flickr user and AP reader Martin Cooper, who has used monochrome to reveal the patterns and textures of the reeds found along the Cannop Ponds in the Forest of Dean.

'I seem to have a thing about designs in nature at the moment and have been to the Forest of Dean several times in the past year or so,' says Martin. 'These reeds on Cannop Ponds are, quite simply, magnificent in their structure. I didn't really

consider using colour and, once converted to mono, the fantastic design of the reeds came into its own, with the reflection adding balance and strength. Increasing the contrast helped make the reeds glow. The fishing platform and the rings in the water add interest and break up the image into individual parts.'

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CD/DVD Send us a disc of high-resolution JPEG, TIFF or PSD images (at least 2480 pixels along its longest length), with a contact sheet, to the address on page 18.

Via our online communities Post your pictures into our Flickr group, Facebook page, Twitter feed, or the gallery on our website. See details above.

Transparencies/prints Well-packaged prints or slides (without glass mounts) should be sent by Special Delivery, with a return SAE, to the address on page 18.

IMAGES MAY BE USED FOR PROMOTION PURPOSES ONLINE AND ON SOCIAL MEDIA

NEWS ROUND-UP

The week in brief, edited by Chris Cheesman

'Fastest' AF in a phone

Sony claims its new Xperia Z5 mobile has the fastest autofocus of any smartphone, at '0.03sec'. Features also include a 23-million-pixel Exmor RS imaging sensor, f/2 G lens and a 'fingerprint-sensor power button'. The Xperia Z5 is housed in a 'waterproof' design and is claimed to deliver better low-light performance 'without blur'. The phone was unveiled at the IFA show in Berlin, earlier this month.



Canon 5D contest

Canon is running an Iconic Images competition to mark 10 years of its EOS 5D-series cameras. Open to amateurs and professionals, Canon is looking for images that represent a story of change.

Ten finalists win an EOS 5D Mark III plus an EF 24-105mm f/4L IS USM lens. Visit www.canon.co.uk – 'Come and See' and 'Gallery' [closing date 2 October 2015].

Archive digitised

More than 2,000 images by Olive Edis (pictured), Britain's first female war photographer, are set to be digitised thanks to an £81,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Archivists will be able to bring together images and journals from her collections ensuring future generations have access. Visitors to Norfolk's Cromer Museum will be able to explore the archive using smartphones and touchscreens.



© NORFOLK MUSEUMS SERVICE

Polaroid digital instant camera



Polaroid has launched a new digital instant camera called the Polaroid Snap, which uses the same printing technology as previous incarnations. The 10MP camera has a built-in printer that produces 2x3in prints using existing 'ink-free' Zero Ink

Printing technology. It also has a MicroSD card slot. It is available late 2015, priced £89.99.

Lumix GH4 video tweaked

Panasonic has announced a revamped version of the Lumix DMC-GH4. The new DMC-GH4R, priced £1,199, features unlimited 4K recording at 24fps, plus V-Log L video capability. V-Log L is said to increase the dynamic range of recorded footage for easier colour grading post-processing. V-Log L is also available to GH4 users via a £79 software upgrade. Visit www.panasonic.com/uk.



WEEKEND PROJECT

Silhouette landscapes

With autumn fast approaching and the sun sitting lower in the sky, now is a good time to get out and shoot a silhouette landscape that displays plenty of drama and vibrant, punchy colours. However, rather than opting for a tight crop on your subject, that produces a more graphic result, why not think about viewing your subject from a slightly wider perspective? With this kind of approach, instead of aiming to capture a total silhouette with a crisp jet-black subject in the foreground, try shooting a partial silhouette instead. Doing this should deliver an image with a slightly wider tonal range that makes for a more three-dimensional result. Follow our four-step guide (right), and see where this approach takes you.

1 Shooting into the light in this way will often trick your camera into trying to achieve a 'correct' exposure, resulting in a brighter image that loses the intended silhouette, so select manual and underexpose the scene.

2 To make the image really successful, avoid cluttered scenes and instead look for distinct shapes that the viewer will easily be able to make out. Either get down low or above your subject to add depth.

BIG picture

Winners of International Landscape Photographer of the Year announced

 Professional and amateur photographers worldwide were invited to enter the second International Landscape Photographer of the Year competition. From 2,604 entries, the winner (based on a folio submission of at least four images) is Luke Austin from Australia. However, this image from runner-up Ricardo Da Cunha, also from Australia, is worth a mention. It shows one of the many volcanoes along the Bolivia/Chile border – an otherworldly landscape.

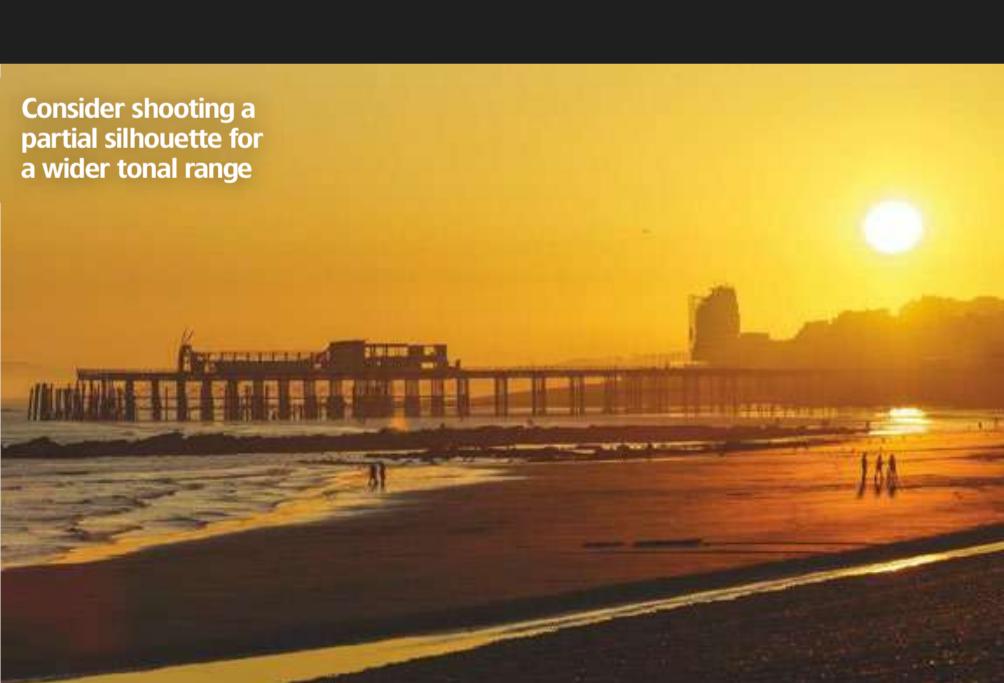
The competition aimed to find the best 101 landscape images from the past 12 months and publish them in a coffee-table book, available in a variety of formats, including a free e-book. For the top 101 images and book download, visit www.internationallandscapephotographer.com.

Words & numbers

Taking pictures is savouring life intensely, every hundredth of a second

Marc Riboud
French photographer
(b1923)

Consider shooting a partial silhouette for a wider tonal range



© PHIL HALL

3 Photographers often try to avoid cloudless skies, but when shooting a silhouette this is exactly what you need. You don't want the sun dipping behind a cloud or a clear sky that will make your subject stand out.

4 Just as your camera will try to correct for the exposure, it will also try to 'correctly' balance the warmth of the image. To avoid your results looking too neutral, dial in a custom setting and shoot raw files.

1,645

The number of exhibitors showing at this year's IFA electronics show earlier this month – a record for the event in Berlin.

Cameras primed to fight IS ruin of ancient sites

MANY lives could be at risk if details of cameras being sent to combat the destruction of ancient sites by Islamic State enter the public domain, warn conservationists.

Archaeologists sounded the alert after announcing plans to send 10,000 specially designed digital cameras to 'willing volunteers' in the Middle East.

Conservationists hope eventually to use the images to print 3D models of archaeological sites and antiquities, should more precious archaeological treasures be lost, such as those recently obliterated in Palmyra, Syria.

Furthermore, crucial information such as the date, time and location of the photos will be used to combat organisations that fund their activities by selling plundered treasures over the internet, and falsely claiming they have been legitimately sourced.

It is hoped police will use the database to track stolen artefacts, to counter claims by those selling an object that it was obtained at a date long before 2015, for example.

The modified cameras will be made to order, cost £20 each and are designed to be easy to use.

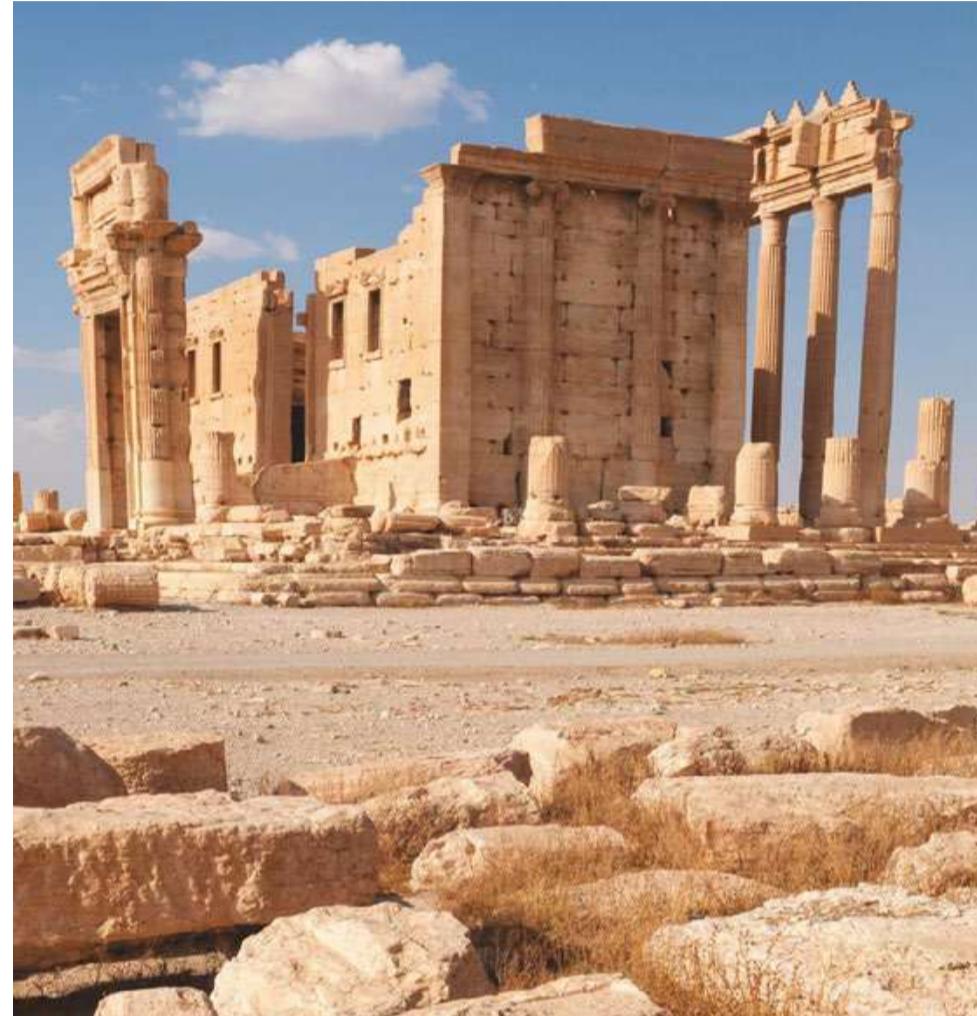
The cameras contain built-in Wi-Fi and GPS, enabling images and location data to be transferred to mobile phones and uploaded to the database – an open-source archive to be held at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University.

Storing the images on memory cards is not an option, as these are physical objects that also risk being destroyed, explained Ben Altshuler, field director at the Institute for Digital Archaeology in Oxford.

Altshuler was reluctant to reveal the exact destinations for the cameras, which use the project's own patented technology.

'We can't disclose the sites... part of what we are doing is staying one step ahead [of Islamic State]. We don't want to put lives in danger,' he told AP.

The project has been in the pipeline for at least nine months, revealed Dr Alexy Karenowska, director of technology at the institute, who helped design the camera – details of which are shrouded in secrecy. The security of its manufacturer,



Islamic State recently destroyed the 2,000-year-old Temple of Bel in the ancient city of Palmyra, Syria

distributor and others in the supply chain may be threatened if images of its appearance were to enter the public domain.

Karenowska would only divulge that the camera is a 10-million-pixel 'pocket-sized' digital compact and 'a relatively low-tech unit'.

'We are extremely worried that if

an image of the camera was widely spread... it would put people in danger,' she said.

'We aim to collect one million images by the end of this year,' said Karenowska, adding that anyone who is willing can get involved, and that the public response has been 'overwhelming'.

Race against time

THE PLAN is to capture up to 20 million 3D images of 'at-risk' objects and architecture by the end of 2016. Archaeologists have joined forces with heritage organisation UNESCO to put together a 'hit list' of sites and are dealing with local people on the ground.

The project is the brainchild of the Institute for Digital Archaeology in Oxford, spearheaded by Roger Michel, a long-time reader of AP and executive director at the Institute.

In a letter to *The Times* last month, Michel wrote: 'Palmyra is rapidly

becoming the symbol of Isis's cultural iconoclasm. If Isis is permitted to rewrite the history of a region that defined global aesthetic and political sensibilities, we will collectively suffer a costly and irreversible defeat. But there is hope.'

Project bosses compare their mission to a 'digital take on *The Monuments Men*' – the 2014 movie that centred on a mission to rescue art masterpieces from Nazi thieves. AP has learned that camera-equipped drones may also be used to photograph ancient sites.

Ricoh unveils Theta S model

RICOH is poised to launch a new addition to its Theta series of 360° spherical cameras, called the Theta S.

Due out in late October, priced £299.99, the Ricoh Theta S is a 14-million-pixel camera that records 360° scenes and up to 25 minutes of full HD video.

It features an f/2 lens, an increased internal memory of 8GB and a Wi-Fi system built to transfer data four times faster than the current Theta.

Ricoh says that a new Google Street View app is designed to allow people to capture and publish their 'photo spheres' to Google Maps.

Meanwhile, the new Ricoh Theta S app for smartphones and tablets can be used to instantly view spherical images and video via wirelessly connected devices.

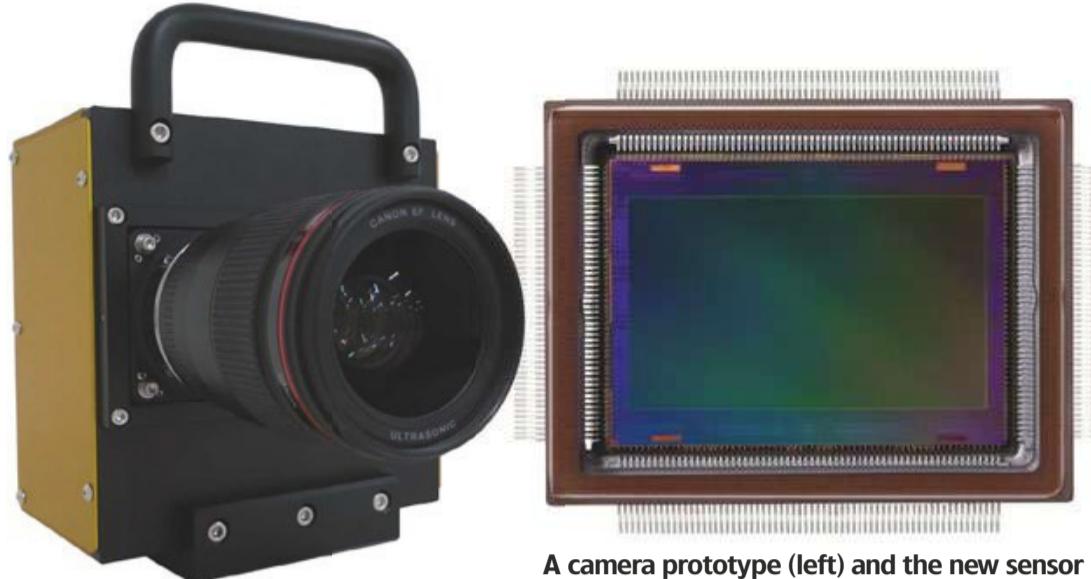


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A camera prototype (left) and the new sensor

Canon reveals 250MP sensor

CANON has said it is developing a 250-million-pixel imaging sensor that can distinguish the lettering on the side of a plane around 11 miles (18km) away.

Canon trumpets the APS-H-size sensor as having the world's largest number of pixels for a CMOS sensor smaller than 35mm full-frame.

It hopes the technology can be used in surveillance cameras and other industrial equipment.

In a statement, Canon said: 'With CMOS sensors, increases in pixel counts result in increased signal volume, which can cause such problems as signal delays and slight discrepancies in timing.'

'The new Canon-developed CMOS sensor, however, despite its exceptionally high pixel count, achieves an ultra-high signal readout speed of 1.25-billion pixels per second, made possible through such advancements as circuit

miniaturisation and enhanced signal-processing technology.'

'Accordingly, the sensor enables the capture of ultra-high-pixel-count video at a speed of 5fps.'

Canon claims the sensor combines high sensitivity with low noise.

It added: 'The exceptionally high definition made possible by the sensor lets users crop and magnify video images without sacrificing image resolution and clarity.'



be announced.

Sony versions are due out at a later date.

Designed for both full-frame and APS-C-size-sensor cameras, the 'moisture-resistant' newcomers feature VC ('vibration compensation') and a nine-blade diaphragm.

'Engineering processes and opto-mechanical construction have been totally integrated in the

design process to create great feel to these lenses and deliver exceptional resolving power whilst reproducing fine details with subtle tonal gradations,' said Tamron.

Tamron trumpets the close-focusing distances of the new lenses: 20cm on the 35mm and 29cm on the 45mm.

The lenses also boast a USD ('ultrasonic silent drive') focus motor.

Tamron opens 'new chapter' in SP optics

TAMRON has announced two new fixed focal-length lenses – a 35mm f/1.8 and 45mm f/1.8 that feature a new metal-barrel design.

The SP ['super performance'] 35mm f/1.8 Di VC USD (above left) and SP 45mm f/1.8 Di VC USD (above right) will be available in Nikon and Canon mounts when they go on sale next month, with prices yet to

For the latest news visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

Get up & go

The most interesting things to see, to do and to shoot this week. By Jon Stapley

TYNE AND WEAR



Dunston Coal Staiths

Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen shows rarely seen photographs of the old coal staiths, once landmarks of the mining industry, at St Mary's Heritage Centre, Gateshead.

Until 31 October, www.newcastlegateshead.com/whats-on/dunston-coal-staiths-an-exhibition-by-sirkka-liisa-konttinen-p795701, tel: 0191 433 4699

VARIOUS



Rugby World Cup

England plays host to the Rugby World Cup this year, and there's sure to be plenty of sporting atmosphere around the country at local clubs to photograph even if you can't get tickets for the World Cup games.

18 September-31 October, www.bbc.co.uk/sport/rugby-union/fixtures

TYNE AND WEAR



Illuminations

Roker Park lights up as Sunderland's annual display of illuminations gets underway. An Alice in Wonderland-themed spectacle and a rainbow of colour, this is an opportunity for some low-light photography. 26 September-1 November, www.seitdoitsunderland.co.uk/sunderland-illuminations

South Bank Stories

Ten people from Southwark reflect on how South Bank has evolved over the past 30 years, accompanied by the portrait photography of Mike Tsang.

Local children were also taught how to take photos of the changing landscape as part of the exhibition.

Until 27 September, www.unicorntheatre.com

LONDON



Zanele Muholi: Vukani/Rise

South African photographer Zanele Muholi explores gender, race and sexuality in her work, relating in particular to South Africa. Four projects are on display at Open Eye Gallery.

18 September-29 November, www.openeye.org.uk

LIVERPOOL





Viewpoint Jon Bentley

The combination of the Nikon 1 V3 with 70-300mm f/4.5-5.6 lens may well change the habits of motorsport enthusiasts and wildlife shooters thanks to its light weight and fast responses

I have a terrible confession to make: when I go to motorsport events I rarely take a separate camera. I think it's the intimidating bulk of the kit required that's the problem. You really need a huge 500mm-plus lens to get close to the action, preferably with as wide a maximum aperture as possible to help 'see through' the safety fences that are frequently a necessary evil. Add a monopod for extra stability and you're soon grappling with a depressing payload that has a disastrous effect on an enjoyable day out – and your bank balance.

However, I've been testing a camera and lens combination that could well change my habits – the Nikon 1 V3 and 1 Nikkor VR 70-300mm f/4.5-5.6 lens launched at the end of last year. Thanks to its 1in sensor, the 1-series has always had the potential to offer compact long lenses, but this new lens is the first from Nikon that's long enough to appeal to motorsport enthusiasts. With its 2.7x crop factor the 189-810mm equivalent zoom weighs just 550g and costs a fraction of a full-frame super-telephoto prime.

At Silverstone motor-racing circuit, I found I could 'zoom through' the safety fencing, and with the V3 on its 20fps setting that boasts full autofocus between shots, it gave reassuringly sharp coverage of cars' progress through high-speed

corners. And all this in a package that felt no bigger or heavier than a DSLR with its kit lens.

The next day, at Worcestershire's Shelsley Walsh Hill Climb, I found I could easily keep up with the action. Potentially gimmicky features like the V3's motion-capture mode, which records slow-motion video either side of a still, actually proved rather useful when shooting motorsport.

It's not perfect. The optional viewfinder is expensive and should anyway be incorporated into the body. Anything over 6fps requires use of the electronic shutter, with its concomitant leaning verticals on panning shots. I also found I was often framing slightly tighter than I'd like, due to the increased depth of field you get with the smaller sensor. And cameras with bigger sensors will still, of course, yield crisper pictures with better dynamic range, and less noise in low light.

But this combination's light weight, fast responses and acceptable image quality could well transform the photographic lives of motorsport enthusiasts. That's not to mention wildlife shooters and any photographers who need to get close to distant, fast-moving subjects without breaking their backs, or the bank.

Jon Bentley is a TV producer and presenter best known for *Top Gear* and Channel 5's *The Gadget Show*

The Nikon 1 V3 gives sharp coverage even when shooting around high-speed corners



Do you have something you'd like to get off your chest? Send us your thoughts in around 500 words to the address on page 18 and win a year's digital subscription to AP, worth £79.99

New Books

The latest and best books from the world of photography. By Charley Jones



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Where Hunting Dogs Rest

By Martin Usborne, Kehler Verlag, £32, 108 pages, hardcover, ISBN 978-3-86828-595-6

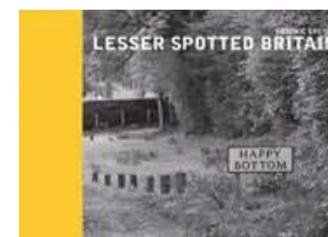


EVOKING emotion and telling a story is difficult to do in just one photo, but in this breathtakingly beautiful book, Martin Usborne does just that. Bringing together the sweeping elegance of greyhounds and the injustice of their mistreatment, these photographs aren't brutal: they don't urge you to look away, but instead invite you to get to know every greyhound pictured and feel for them. Along with the haunted rescue greyhounds, (which Usborne refers to as 'the lucky ones'), the book also includes images of the isolated and diverse landscapes where the dogs were abandoned. In the style of the artist Velázquez, Usborne attempts to elevate Spanish greyhounds to their previous position of greatness and, within the boundaries of this book, he more than succeeds.

★★★★★

Lesser Spotted Britain

By Dominic Greyer, Portico, £9.99, 112 pages, hardcover, ISBN 978-1-90939-678-4



HUMOUR is incredibly subjective: where one person may find something funny, another may find it offensive. There is undeniable skill in finding a universally funny subject and bringing it to life. Dominic Greyer does this by taking one of the most inoffensive (or so we thought) subjects of all time and making it hilarious – street signs. From 'Sandy Balls' in Hampshire to 'Twatt' in Shetland, Greyer visits and photographs some of the quirkiest and most questionable place names in the country. While Greyer should also be commended for his camera skills, this book's main appeal is in its overarching ability to make you giggle – not forgetting the helpful captions that give the etymology of the bizarrely chosen words and the location of the signs.

★★★★★

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Jeremy Walker

Jeremy Walker is an award-winning professional photographer with many years' experience specialising in high-quality landscape and location photography for advertising, design and corporate clients. A Nikon Ambassador, Jeremy's meticulous approach serves his clients well. www.jeremywalker.co.uk



The Brecon Beacons National Park in Wales offers some fabulous spots

KIT LIST



Lens choice

A good range of focal-length lenses will be useful, depending on how close you can get to the waterfall. A 24-70mm and 70-200mm lens will cover most eventualities, but an extreme wideangle, such as Nikon's 14-24mm f/2.8 zoom, will work well for closer shots.



Filters

A circular polariser is useful for enhancing the colour of any rainbows, but also for taking the sheen and reflections off the surface of the water and increasing contrast. A 6-stop or 10-stop filter is also handy to increase the exposure length to create blur and motion.





Head for the falls

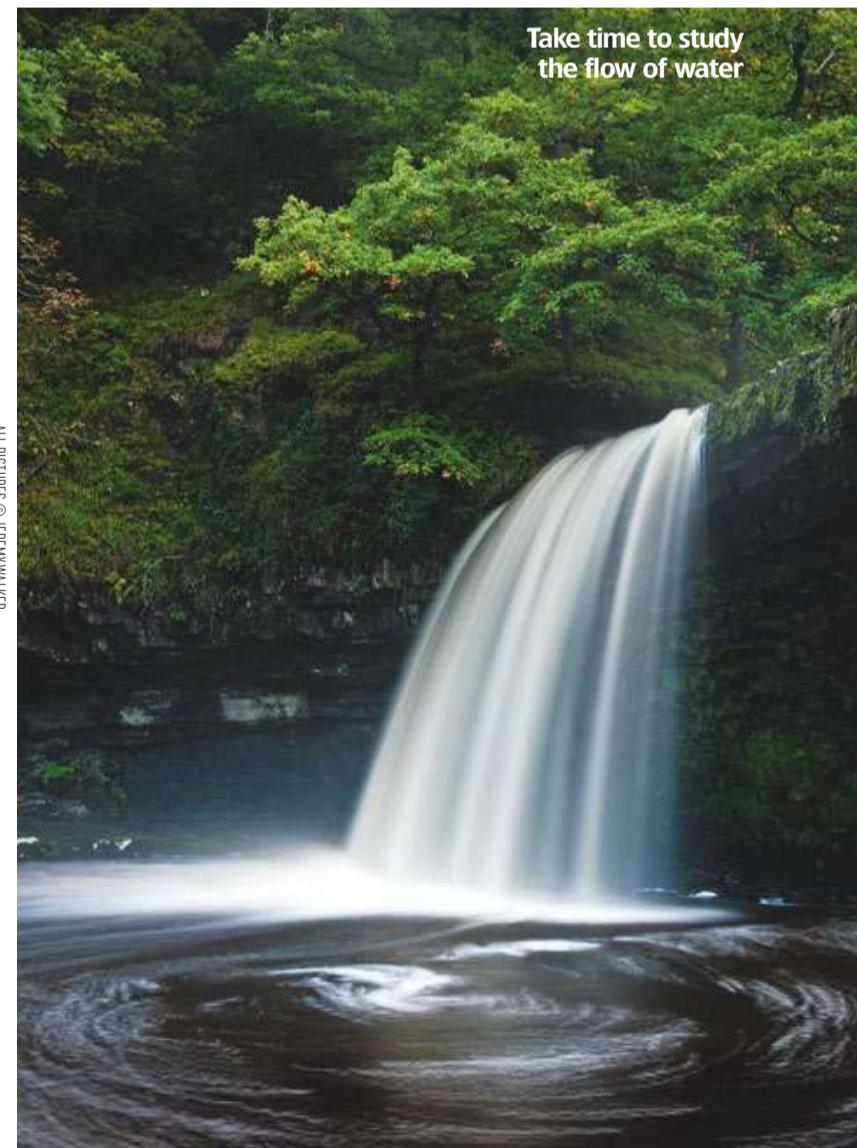
A visual feast throughout the UK, waterfalls are fantastic natural features to photograph. **Jeremy Walker** looks at the best ways to shoot them

We're lucky to have a huge variety of waterfalls across the UK, especially in Wales, Scotland and the North of England. Southern England isn't short on these cascades of water, either, with some excellent examples on Exmoor in Somerset.

Waterfalls are simple, elegant features to shoot and you don't need one the size of Niagara Falls to get good images. A waterfall of 4ft-5ft (1.2-1.5m) or even a few feet across can be just as photogenic – sometimes more so than a great roaring giant that is producing so much spray you can't get near it.

On first seeing a waterfall, look around your location and take time to study the flow of water. Waterfalls will pulse with the flow and volume of water. Don't fall into the trap of trying to shoot the waterfall in its entirety, as you'll find many

Take time to study the flow of water



ALL PICTURES © JEREMY WALKER

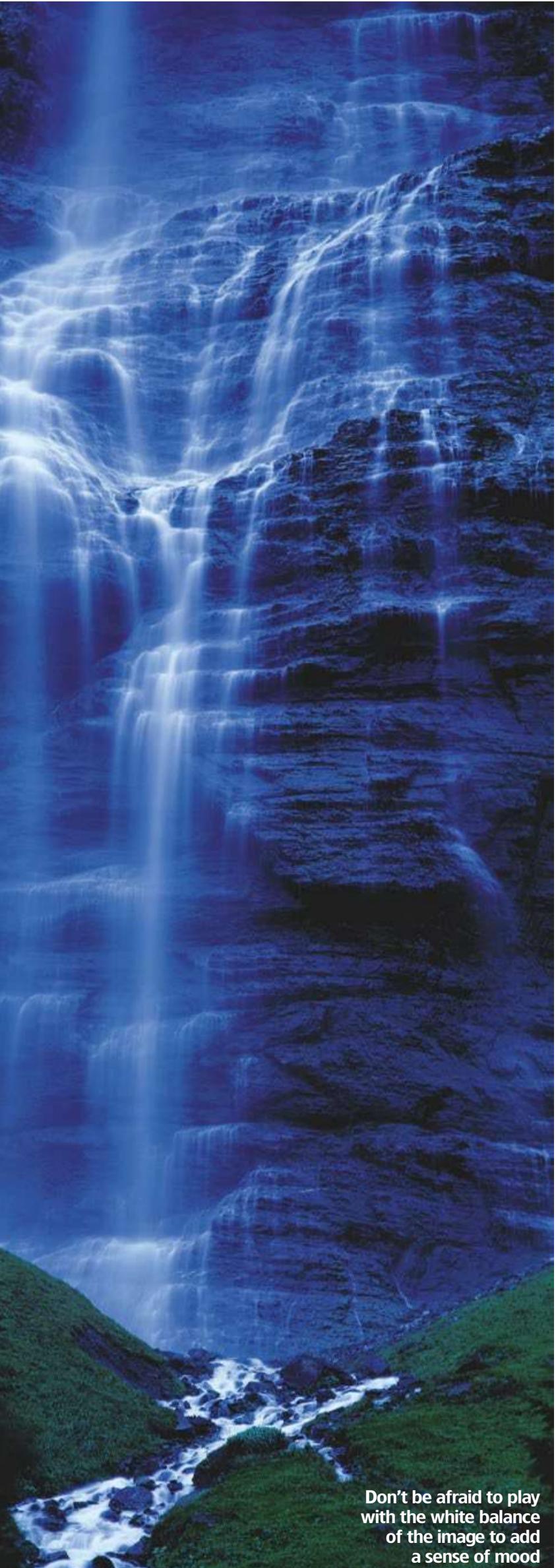
◀ Chamois cloth

A chamois cloth of the type available at motoring accessory shops is useful for wrapping around your lens and camera to protect your kit from spray. It's also useful for wiping moisture off your camera kit should it get wet.



◀ Wellies

At some stage you'll probably want to shoot from the wettest place possible, and you'll end up in a puddle or a tributary of the river. If you need new wellies, choose the neoprene-lined thermal variety. Warm, dry feet are essential.



Don't be afraid to play with the white balance of the image to add a sense of mood



► excellent images by looking for sections, abstracts, details or close-ups. Try to identify individual rivulets within a fall, curtains of water, or rocks and boulders that will add shape, direction and flow to your shot.

Health and safety

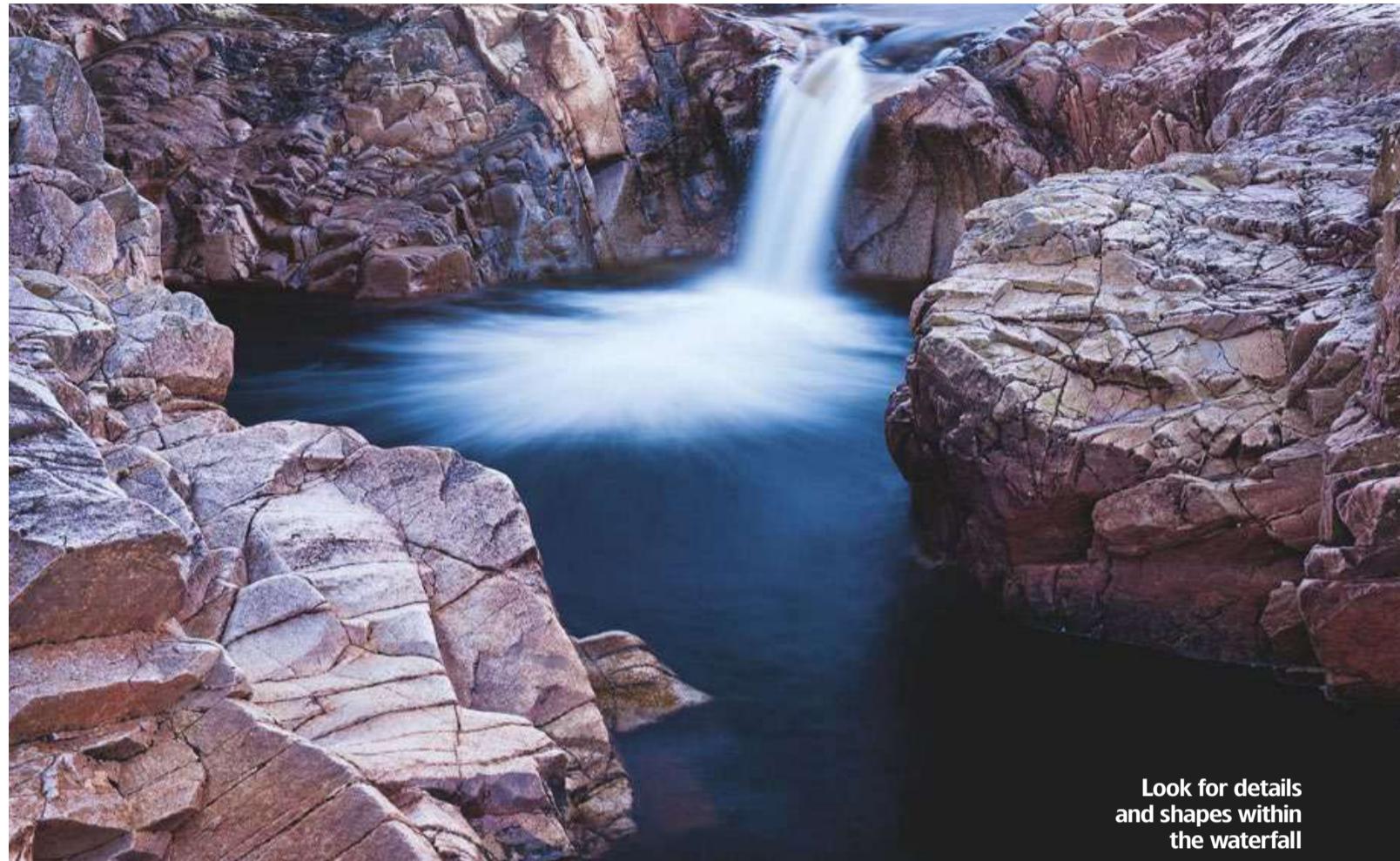
Before you shoot your waterfall, be aware that you'll probably be working in a wet environment, with spray from the falls making the surrounding area very slippery. Take care when climbing over rocks to get in position and carry your kit in a camera bag. Moving around a wet, slippery location with thousands of

pounds' worth of camera kit on a tripod is asking for trouble. If there's spray coming from the waterfall you'll need to protect the front of your lens with a lens hood. If moisture is falling on the camera, try using a chamois cloth to wrap around it and help protect it and the barrel of the lens.

There are probably two main approaches to shooting a waterfall: the big, wide view, perhaps showing the whole of the falls, going for the dramatic in its landscape setting; or the closer, more intimate portrait showing the finer detail that's easily missed when struck by the grandeur of a big fall. Both approaches can work well, but look for a composition



Be careful when shooting waterfalls as the slippery surfaces can be dangerous



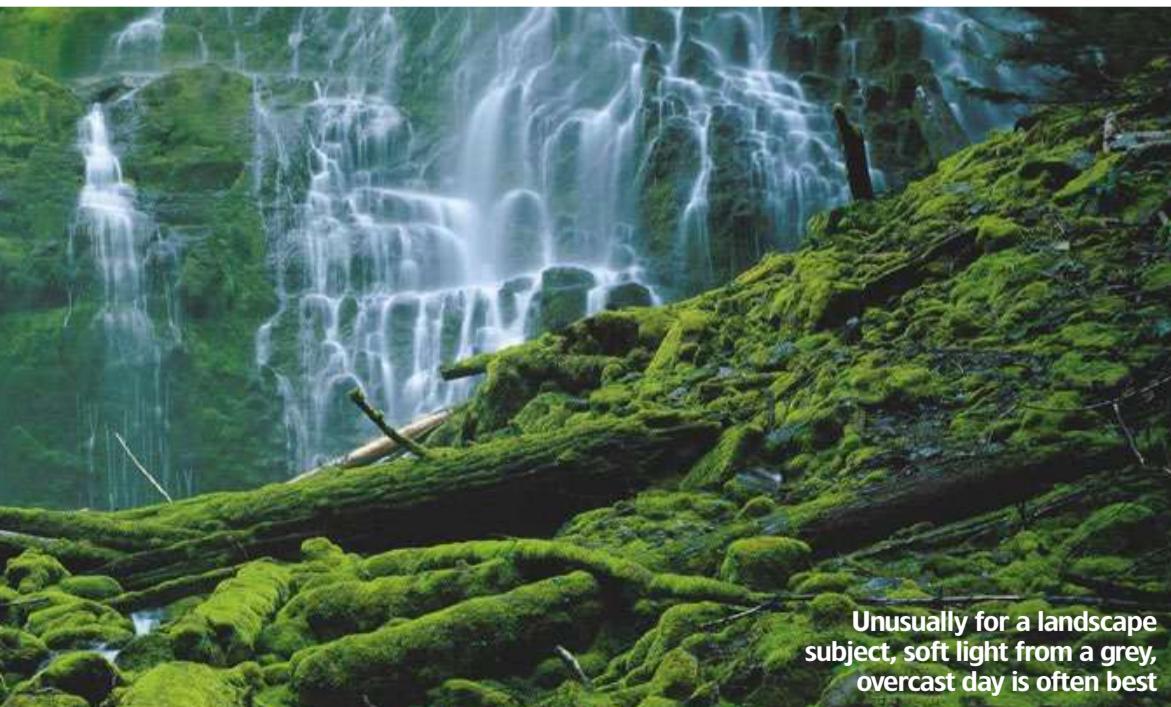
that helps to tell a story, such as fallen rocks at the base of a waterfall, a dead tree across the river or even plant life growing in the rock face. The most simple tool for composition is, of course, the camera itself, and don't be afraid to turn the camera through 90° to shoot upright. It sounds so simple, but when faced with a long, wide subject it's tempting just to use the camera horizontally.

Best time to shoot

The light at the beginning and end of the day is usually regarded as best for shooting landscapes, and this can also work for waterfalls, but they do present a unique set of problems.

Many waterfalls will be in V-shaped river-cut valleys, and early morning and late evening light won't hit the falls unless the valley is facing roughly east or west. When the sun is high, direct light on the water can be too contrasty and the highlights will lose all detail. The water will also look mottled and messy.

Unusually for a landscape subject, soft light from a grey, overcast sky can be the ideal conditions for shooting waterfalls. Soft light lacking contrast will always illuminate the water evenly and make it look much smoother. Also, if the waterfall is surrounded by trees and heavy foliage, a soft light will prevent



Unusually for a landscape subject, soft light from a grey, overcast day is often best



Before



After

Before and after

Compose and set up your shot as normal, metering for a midtone grey. Shoot with the indicated exposure, checking the histogram to ensure that the highlights and shadows aren't clipping. Apply a Lee Big Stopper type of filter and recalculate the exposure. In the case of a Big Stopper, it would be 10 stops, (for example, 1/30sec would become 32secs). Expose at the new recalculated exposure and the water should become blurred or smooth and silky, depending on how fast it is flowing.

Technique WATERFALLS

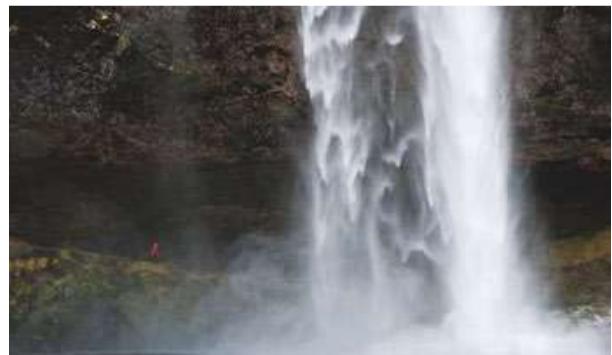
Shooting a panorama is a great way to show a waterfall's size and scale

'A long exposure of several seconds, even minutes, will enable you to capture a smooth flow and silkiness to the water'



You don't always have to go for the big view, so make sure you look for close-ups

JEREMY'S TOP TIPS



Sense of scale

It can be difficult to convey the size and power of a waterfall. Because we can relate to the size of a human, use a person, preferably brightly dressed in a red jacket (as seen above), and have them stand near the waterfall.



Enhance colour

If there's enough spray, and you can get the right angle relative to the direction of sunlight, you'll get a rainbow. Use a polariser to enhance the colours, but be aware that the polariser increases your exposure by up to 2 stops.



Close-ups

If you can't take a 'big view', showing the waterfall in all its splendour, look for smaller 'micro' alternatives. Search for close-ups or abstracts and use long exposures to show the flow of water that the human eye can't see.



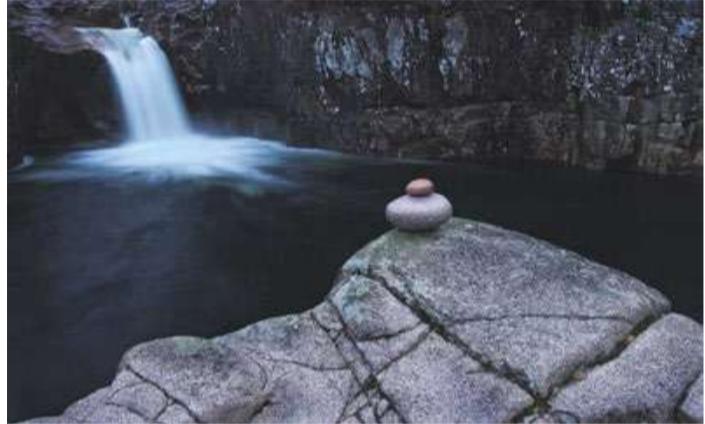
1/2000sec or higher? Or do you go for an exposure of several seconds, perhaps even minutes, and capture a smooth flow and silkiness to the water? Both techniques have their merits and can help convey a story or message.

If you choose the fast shutter speed approach, you may want to bump up the ISO, so you can have a high shutter speed and still shoot at a reasonable f-number for depth of field, such as around f/8 or f/11. Using a flashgun will also 'freeze' the motion of water, but you'll only be able to cover a relatively small area of the waterfall with this technique. You may also have unwanted and very false-looking highlights.

To prolong your exposure and create the silky-smooth-flow effect, you'll need to increase the exposure by dropping the ISO down to as low as it will go and then using a filter such as

the Lee Filters Big Stopper. This will increase the indicated exposure by 10 stops, with a 1sec exposure, for example, becoming 17mins. However, you don't actually need 17mins, as anything from a few seconds to a couple of minutes will start to look good, depending, of course, on how fast the water is moving. Remember to meter for a midtone grey, rather than the pure white of the waterfall for an accurate reading. If you meter for the white of the water, you'll end up underexposing the shot.

Shooting waterfalls can be fun, and to a certain degree therapeutic and soothing, but a final word of warning: shoot from the bottom of the waterfall and look up. Climbing to the top of a waterfall and looking down is rarely the best view and you risk standing on wet slippery rocks right next to a long drop. It's not the fall that hurts you – it's the landing! **AP**



One that didn't work - or did it?

Simplicity is often the key to success. Every now and then we'll see an image, shoot it, think we quite like it and then, a few minutes later, a nagging doubt sets in and we try to 'improve' the shot. I'm never averse to a little 'gardening' if it helps an image, such as removing a distracting twig, stone or leaf. However, if you have to start building the foreground there may be something wrong. Does the image need a pile of nicely shaped boulders? Should there be more stones in the pile or should I have just lived with the foreground as it was?

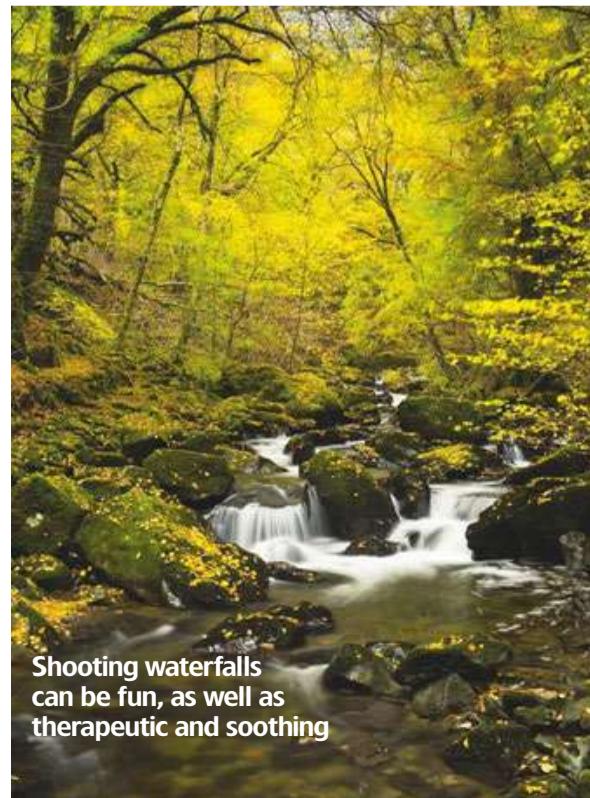
Don't give up

If you turn up to shoot a waterfall and things aren't as you planned or hoped, don't just walk away with nothing. Look for the offbeat or even bizarre. Think 'outside the box' and consider how you can use what is around you to your advantage.



Add mood

Use the camera's white balance control to alter the mood, look and colour of an image. Blue will suggest cold and wintry conditions (3200K or lower), while a higher setting makes the image warmer. This technique works best when there's no other colour in the image.

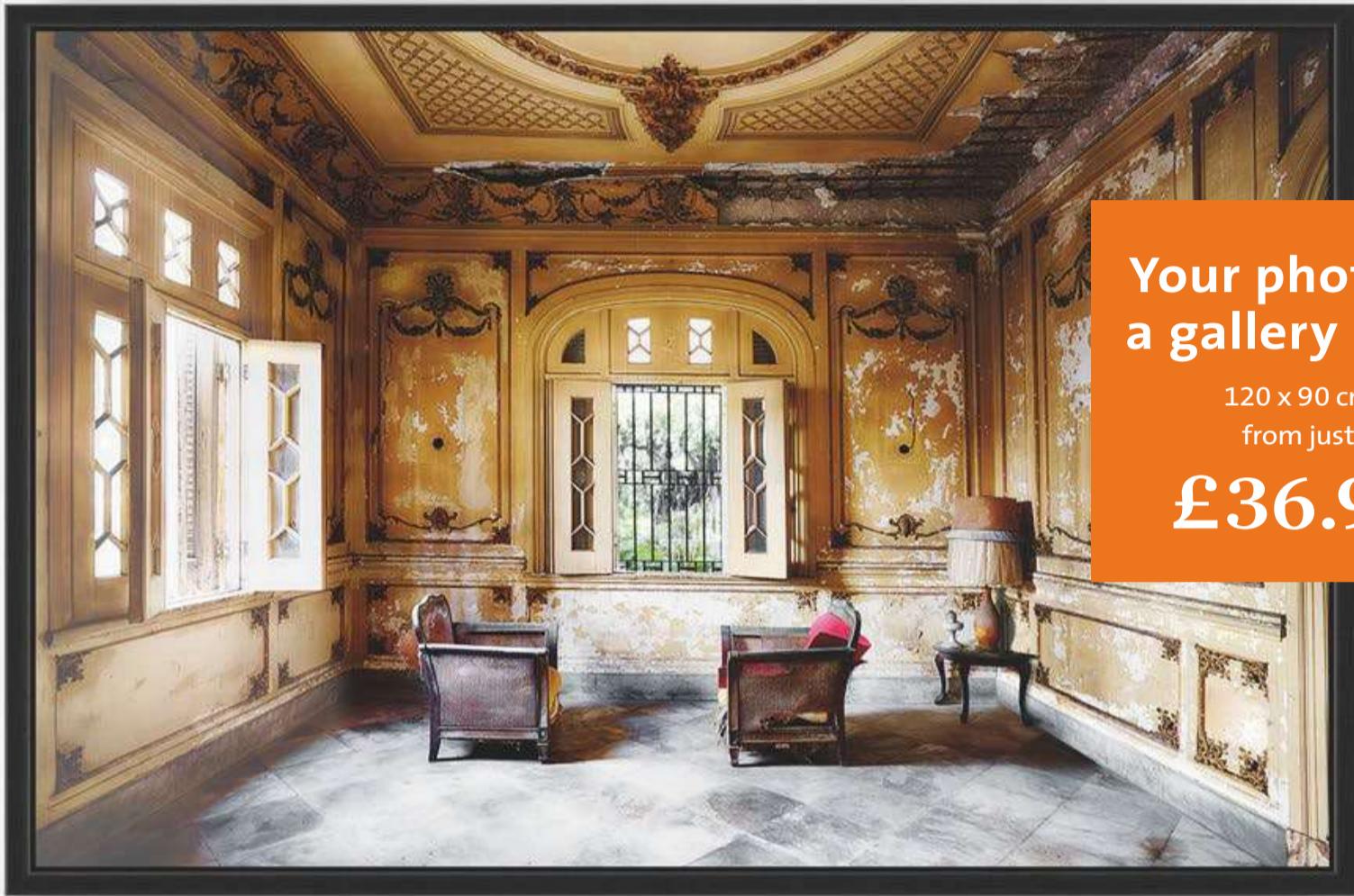


Shooting waterfalls can be fun, as well as therapeutic and soothing

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Future formats

Regarding the recent letters in AP about whether or not there is a future for the traditional DSLR, I use a full-frame DSLR, a very small Micro Four Thirds compact system camera and an iPhone. The difference in my experience is that each encourages a different aesthetic. The DSLR encourages thoughtful work, the CSC encourages spontaneity as I can have it in my hand at all times, and the iPhone encourages inventiveness and experiment. I therefore wouldn't be without any of them. And if something else comes along in the future that encourages a different aesthetic, then I'll have four!

Stefan Shillington, Warwickshire

My thoughts, which are not necessarily the same as those of the rest of the AP team, are that the DSLR is a dying beast. As technology improves there becomes less and less reason to use a DSLR. The electronic viewfinders were a stumbling point, but the next generation of 3-million-dot EVFs look fantastic, and it is far easier to use them to focus with precision accuracy. Focus speeds are now just as good, for all but sports professionals. I think we will see a new generation of larger mirrorless cameras that will offer more stability for longer telephoto lenses. My prediction is that within ten years DSLR cameras will be the exception rather than the norm

– Richard Sibley, deputy editor



Win!

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Analysis analytics

I've been a huge fan of the articles that Roger Hicks has written in AP for more years than I can remember. As others have already said, I don't always agree with his views, but he always makes me think – both about photography and about the many areas outside photography that he has discussed over the years, and that's a real achievement.

I have no hesitation in seeing Roger as a very real asset to your magazine, someone who brings something rather different – and very valuable – to the mix.

That said, I've also enjoyed Ogden

Chesnutt's two editions of Roger's *Final Analysis* column very much (AP 29 August and 5 September). Roger is not an easy act to follow, but Ogden has pulled this off admirably with two well-written and thought-provoking pieces.

I was sorry when Ogden stopped writing for AP, but hope you'll publish more of his thoughts in the future.

Adrian Lewis, Bristol

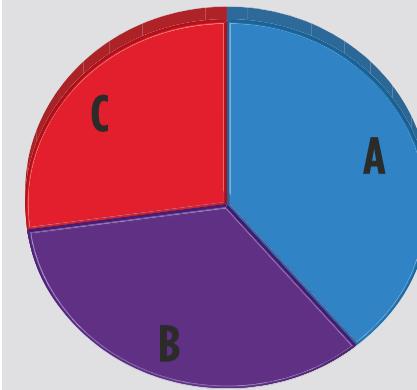
G-Xcellent

I refer to David Richards' letter in AP 29 August regarding the Panasonic Lumix DMC-GX8. In his estimation, both the body and lenses are exorbitantly priced.

I bought a GX8 with the 12-35mm lens and am delighted with the package. The GX8 has the usual features of Panasonic cameras, such as extra optical zoom and intelligent sensitivity (which I find



The 20.3-million-pixel Panasonic Lumix DMC-GX8 has a vari-angle touchscreen



In AP 29 August, we asked...

Do you ever fill out the warranty cards that come with your camera or lenses?

You answered...

A No, I never have	39%
B Yes, always	34%
C Yes, I have done but not always	27%

What you said

'These days it is easier to register online than fill in and post warranty cards'

'This is only relevant if you're buying new – which I've only done once in 30 years'

'You still retain all your rights under the sale of goods act, so, unless you want continuous emails from manufacturers and suppliers, don't go there. A well-known camera brand got hold of my email address, and I now get one or two emails a week offering refurbished camera equipment and discounted discontinued items'

'An issue I have with registration cards is that they often need a dealer's stamp – which, even when buying in person, is hard to remember to ask for'

[Join the debate on the AP forum](#)

This week we ask

Do you get as much enjoyment from editing images as you do from taking them?

Vote online www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

Guess the camera



Every other week we post a photograph of a camera on our Facebook page and all you have to do is guess the make and model. To guess the make and model of this camera (above), head over to www.facebook.com/Amateurphotographer.magazine. Forum members can also enter via the forum.



The 29 August issue's cover is from 13 June 1973. The winner is John Palmer from Bath, whose correct guess was the first drawn at random.

 fantastic), but it also has the special feature of dual image stabilisation.

Although it doesn't function with every lens, it does with the one I bought. As far as I'm aware, this camera is, at present, unique with this feature. As explained in your review of the camera (AP 22 August), there is a stabilisation system in the body that works in conjunction with lens stabilisation. I tried this at 1/2sec shutter speed on flowing water – handheld – and the background was acceptably sharp.

Much of my work also involves filming video, and the camera really produces stunning quality in 4K.

One issue in your review was the obstruction of the screen when a microphone is plugged in. Certainly full articulation is not possible. Also, the camera is designed for the MS1 microphone, but I have used it with the MS2 shotgun mic and that works perfectly well.

Mr Richards suggests buying a full-frame camera. That is the last sort of camera I would buy, knowing its weight and bulk. No, I can thoroughly recommend the GX8 and its host of features that enable it to take excellent stills as well as movies.

Alec Mollison, Angus

You are just the person I had in mind when I wrote my reply stating that the 4K capabilities of the GX8 would be a fantastic feature for many, especially with the stabilisation and the price. More and more photographers are experimenting with video capture, which is why we have launched www.thevideomode.com in association with Canon UK – Richard Sibley, deputy editor

Goods quality

I read Tony Warmsley's letter about the AF failure of his Tamron lens (AP 29 August) and would suggest that he go back to the shop the lens was bought from. In the UK, goods have to be of good quality and last for a reasonable time. I think there's a sound argument that an AF lens failing after only 18 months suggests that the item was not of sufficient quality, and that the reasonable life of a lens is definitely more than 18 months. The trading standards website via Citizens Advice also gives a lot of good information on the subject (www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer).

Andrew Wright, via email

That's good advice! Try your retailer as the first port

of call and see what they say – Richard Sibley, deputy editor

Ad gripe

I bought an Olympus OM-D E-M5 from an advertisement on the back of AP last year. In AP 5 September there's a big ad for the new Olympus model on the back of AP, as well as a write-up inside about the same camera.

As I flick through AP, I see full-page spreads for Fujifilm X-series cameras, and it makes me wonder if AP has become some big advert for the camera industry. I accept you must run adverts to survive, but this seems to be blatant hype for things in the market place. I don't see the point in spending £2.99 for a paper full of ads I can see online.

Andrew Redding, via email

The number of adverts in AP has stayed about the same in the past few years, and, generally, the editorial pagination isn't affected by the adverts – when an advert goes in, a page of editorial doesn't come out.

If you look through issues from 40 years ago, you had to thumb through ten or more pages of advertising before you reached an editorial page! – Richard Sibley, deputy editor

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In next week's issue



Wild things
We take a look at some of the most exciting images from this year's British Wildlife Photography Awards

Pro camera settings

We speak to the professionals to find out what settings they use on their cameras

DxO One

It may be the company's first foray in to camera manufacture, but DxO's smartphone camera has already raised a few eyebrows. We put it to the test

APOY Round 6

We reveal the winners of the Black & White round of our annual competition



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AFOY

Amateur Filmmaker of the Year competition

Your chance to enter the UK's newest competition for budding amateur filmmakers

TO COINCIDE with the launch of The Video Mode website, we're pleased to announce our new Amateur Filmmaker of the Year (AFOY) competition. AFOY challenges you to get creative with your filmmaking, and gives you the opportunity to win some fantastic prizes worth £10,000 in total.

The competition is split into three rounds, each with its unique theme: Nature, Time and Love. To enter, submit a video no more than five minutes in length, of HD quality. You can shoot on any camera you'd like, and the content and editing are up to your imagination – so long as it fits

the round's particular theme.

Visit www.thevideomode.com to view the top videos, as well as the scores and a leaderboard for the overall competition. The winner will be the person with the most points after three rounds, who will win the overall prize as well as title of Amateur Filmmaker of the Year.

Round One: Nature

In this round we ask you to film nature from a new perspective. Look at the world around you – from urban foxes at twilight, to a spectacular sunrise – from a new angle and get creative with unique viewpoints. To see examples, go to www.thevideomode.com/examples.

Rounds and dates

Below is a list of the competition rounds, their themes and the dates you need to know. To view the results, visit www.thevideomode.com. When planning your entry, take into consideration the criteria of fulfilling the brief, creativity and technical excellence on which you'll be judged.

Theme	Opens	Closes
Round One: Nature	1 Aug	30 Sep
Round Two: Time	1 Oct	31 Dec
Round Three: Love	1 Jan	28 Feb

The overall winner will be announced in April 2016

Prizes

Enter to win your share of prizes worth over £10 000!
Here's what you could receive:

Round One

Canon EOS 7D Mark II, worth £1,499.99

Canon Legria Mini X, worth £329.99

Round Two

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, worth £2,499.99
Canon Legria Mini X, worth £329.99

Round Three

Canon XC10 (with 128GB CFast card and reader), worth £1,999.99

Canon Legria Mini X, worth £329.99

Overall prize

Canon Cinema EOS C100 Mark II, worth £3,599.99

Visit www.thevideomode.com/afoy
to send us a link to your short film and to view the full terms and conditions

THE VIDEO MODE  In association with 

Altered reality

Swedish photographer and digital artist **Erik Johansson's** hybrid, surreal images have captured the imagination of many around the world. He talks to **Steve Fairclough** about his career so far



'Cut & Fold (Cut Along the Dotted Line)', 2012



Erik Johansson is rapidly building an international reputation, not to mention an impressive client list, for his innovative imagery that combines different elements in a quirky, highly polished way. At just 30 years old, the self-taught photographer and retoucher has a TED Conference talk under his belt and describes his striking work as ‘photo realistic surrealism’. At first glance his pictures look normal, until suddenly you realise there’s a lot more going on.

Erik has combined his love of sketching, computers and photography to carve out a burgeoning career. Computers and drawing have always been his two big interests, but when he got his first digital camera, in around 2000, Erik found a perfect platform with which to experiment and combined them into something

new. As he says, ‘It took about a minute to transfer each image to the computer. But it was still amazing because you didn’t really have anything to compare it to.’

After growing up on his parents’ farm in the Swedish countryside, Erik moved to Gothenburg in 2005 to study computer engineering at university. ‘During my studies I took up photography again,’ he says. ‘I started studying in 2005 and finished in 2010, so it was during this time that I started developing my style and the stuff that I’m doing today.’

He obtained a bachelor’s degree in computer engineering and then took a master’s in interaction design because he wanted something a bit more visual. ‘I thought that interaction design could be quite interesting, as it’s a person working between the designer and a programmer,’ he says. ‘I really



enjoyed that – it was a lot of fun, but in the end it still felt like photography and retouching could be even more fun.'

That has since proven to be the case for Erik, with his imaginative and complex photo edits securing big-ticket clients such as Adobe, Google, National Geographic and Volvo.

'I remember surfing the web a lot and I was amazed by what you can do by combining images together to make something else,' he says. 'The personal work is how it started – I just did these pictures because I love it. Then people approached me and asked, "Hey, can we make something similar?" or if they could buy a picture. I usually said no because I wanted my personal work to stay independent, but I always offered to make them something new – that's usually how it happened.'

'It was around 2009 that I first got clients, a few years after I first started doing more of my own work. I started posting my work to online photo communities – mainly Swedish ones, but also Deviant Art [www.deviantart.com] and other international ones. That's when it started to spread on the internet and, in the beginning, I mainly got requests for retouching.'

Erik started working for an advertising agency in Ytterberg, Sweden. 'They had this client who built swimming pools,' he explains. 'The swimming pools weren't actually in the locations they shot, so they had to put them into different cool scenarios – that's

ALL PICTURES © ERIK JOHANSSON



Above: 'Big Laundry Day', 2011

Left: 'Wet Dreams on Open Waters', 2008

Far right:
'Dream walking... in Between Worlds', 2014



what I started with. Then, the more personal work I did, the more requests I got to do new work and commissioned work as well. It was just something that happened slowly. Most of my clients want to give me a bit more creative freedom. It is kind of fun to have the creative freedom, but it's not very common that someone comes to me with an idea for a picture. They usually have some kind of sketches and then I'll do something that I think will look better and they can improve it – it's a discussion. It's fun to be part of the process, but it's always a challenge.'

Planning and shooting images
Erik has a simple three-stage way of working – idea, shoot, edit. 'It always starts with a very simple idea,' he says. 'I think about how to combine different things that normally don't really go together and create a transition between those two things in a realistic way.'



It's something that grows slowly and many of the ideas that I've realised are ideas that I got several months, or even years, ago. It's usually good to let the idea take time, as it gives you the room to come back and find new ways to improve it and make it more interesting. That's actually something a lot of people don't realise – the planning and the coming up with ideas is a very long process.'

Despite having moved to live in Berlin, Germany, Erik often returns to his native Sweden for his shoots as he knows the landscapes so well and also has better access to vehicles and tools, in case he needs to build any simple props for his shoots. 'For shooting, I usually start with the part that's the hardest to find the right perspective in; it's good to start with the angle you want to go from and then adapt the other parts to that angle,' he says. 'When you capture the images, it's

the light and perspective that are most important, you have to ensure they stay the same throughout the different material you want to combine.'

The kit

Erik mainly works with a 40-million-pixel Hasselblad H5D-40 camera with either a 24mm prime lens or a 35-90mm zoom, and sometimes uses a Canon EOS 5D Mark II to photograph details for his images. 'I use the Hasselblad more on a very planned shoot, because I really like how it captures the colour and crispness of the pictures,' he adds. 'Using a medium-format camera makes you slow down because it's not always that easy to work with, which can be a good thing. I always use it on a tripod, even in daylight – I think it's just easier and usually produces a better result in the end.'

Normally, Erik uses aperture priority mode and sets apertures to somewhere around f/10 to f/13 to get quite a big depth of field. 'Then I just let the shutter decide on its own,' he says. 'It's not too much about the equipment; it's more about the ideas. The third step is putting it together in Photoshop. That's basically a pretty straightforward process – it's more like putting the pieces of the puzzle together.'

Editing the images

Erik's image-editing skills are self-taught. He started out by playing with a trial copy of





Corel PaintShop Pro software that was free with a PC magazine. When he bought his first DSLR – a Canon EOS 400D – in 2007, he became more serious about picture editing and began using Adobe Photoshop.

'I think by experimenting, you get to know the limitations of the tool, you know what you can do with it and you know what tools you need to create something. Now I use Adobe Creative Cloud 2015. I like the background saving that came in with CS6, so you don't have to wait while you save – you can still work on a picture. Some smaller features, like Puppet Warp, are pretty nice to use occasionally.'

'I use Lightroom to import all the photos, then I go through everything without thinking too much and the pictures that I like I give stars – three, four or five. Then I just filter them and try to narrow them down to the ones I like the most. That's usually what I start with. I bring that picture into Photoshop, cut it out roughly and try to place everything where I want it to be. From there I start working on the details'



and try to cut it out more finely, until I have a finished picture.' If a picture isn't working, Erik will sometimes stop the edit and select a different one to work on.

The tools he uses are mainly for cutting out, like the Magnetic Lasso or the Pen tool, and he uses layer masks for showing and hiding different parts of the pictures. He then uses curved layers and saturation to match the different elements together.

'If you know how to use those basic tools, that's all you need to create something like this,' says Erik. 'It's more about the material: to have good material and photograph everything in the right light and perspective, and then place it all on top of each other. Just mask it and cut it out, then it'll go together automatically.'

This editing process can often be spread out over a period of time, sometimes months, although Erik estimates that on average each image takes between one and two days of working time to complete.

'I always want it to look realistic, but I also want to create these impossible places,' he says. 'It's

difficult, but that's the challenge. It's hard for me to explain my thought process exactly; I simply have this idea about how I want to do it and try to make sure I have the same perspective and light in all the parts that I want to combine.

'Usually it has a working name, like "the road" or "the mirror", which just describes what's in the picture. Then I sometimes try to come up with a play on words for the title, but usually I just put something on it that represents what it means to me.'

Ideas and inspirations

Erik admits that he sometimes runs out of ideas. 'That's why as soon as an idea comes to me, I try to make a very simple sketch of it so it doesn't go away,' he says. 'There are a lot of times when you don't feel creative and you can't really come up with ideas, and you feel you may never come up with an idea again! Then it's good to have some concepts on paper that you can go back to and try realise.'

As for his future plans, Erik is looking north for fresh locations. 'It would be interesting to go to

Top far left: 'No Time to Waste, Let's Leave', 2013

Above: 'Helping Fall', 2011

Far left: 'Vertical Turn', 2009



To see more of Erik Johansson's work, visit [www.erikjohanssonphoto.com](http://erikjohanssonphoto.com)

Svalbard, north of Norway, or the Faroe Islands or Iceland,' he says. 'I think Scotland or Ireland would be very nice as well. For inspiration, I like more rough, wide, big landscapes. There are a lot of places I want to go.'

'As much as I like the commissioned work, I think it would be fun to have even more time to do personal work. At the moment I'm starting to build up quite a good body of work and I think it could be fun to do more exhibitions, focusing even more on personal work as well as the commissioned work. It would be fun to make a book at some point.'

When quizzed for his advice to those who might want to follow in his footsteps, Erik says, 'I think it's always better to follow your own heart and do what you like doing. There's so much competition, it's better to focus on what you're good at and what you like doing. Hopefully, people will like that too – that's how you'll get jobs in the end. It's so much more fun if you do something that you like instead of doing something that you think people will like.'

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The cover of Amateur Photographer magazine features several headlines and images. At the top right, it says "Canon EOS 760D Time to upgrade? Find out why this is the best three-digit EOS yet". In the center, there's a large image of a red poppy flower. To the left, there's a smaller image of a Fujifilm X-T1 camera with the text "Fujifilm X-T1 V4.0 Why this new firmware has made a great camera even better". On the right side, there's a column titled "Telly photos Reflecting on 30 years of shooting celebrities for TV Times". At the bottom, there's a large headline "31 expert tips for Summer Landscapes, wildlife, nature, portraits, events... How to get great shots, whatever your subject". A barcode is visible in the bottom right corner.

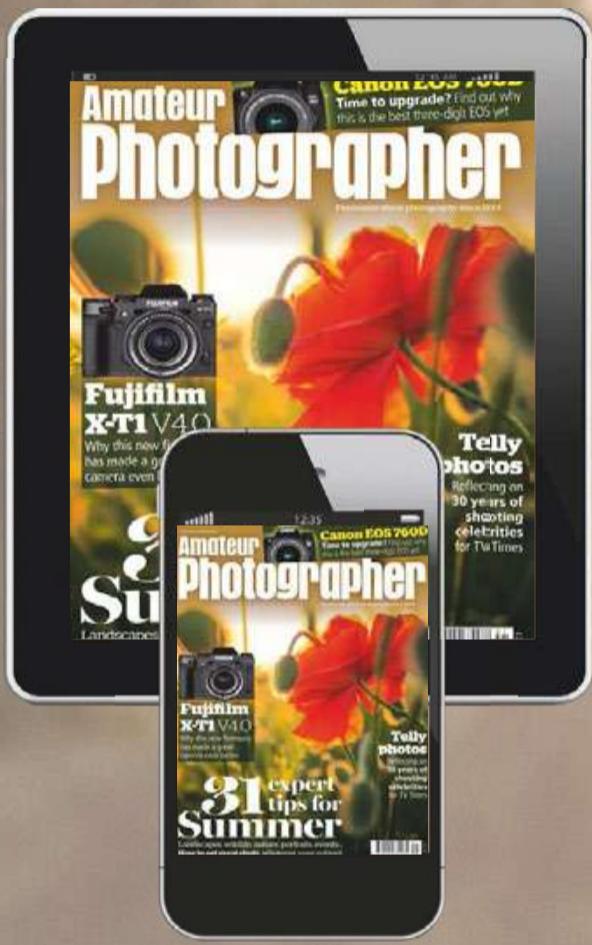


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WILDLIFE WATCH

Red deer

With the annual deer rut about to take place, it's the best time of the year to capture these evocative beasts, as **Andrew Mason** reveals



A 70-200mm lens is handy for wider environmental shots of red deer



The annual rut is one of the highlights of the wildlife calendar

ALL PICTURES © ANDREW MASON

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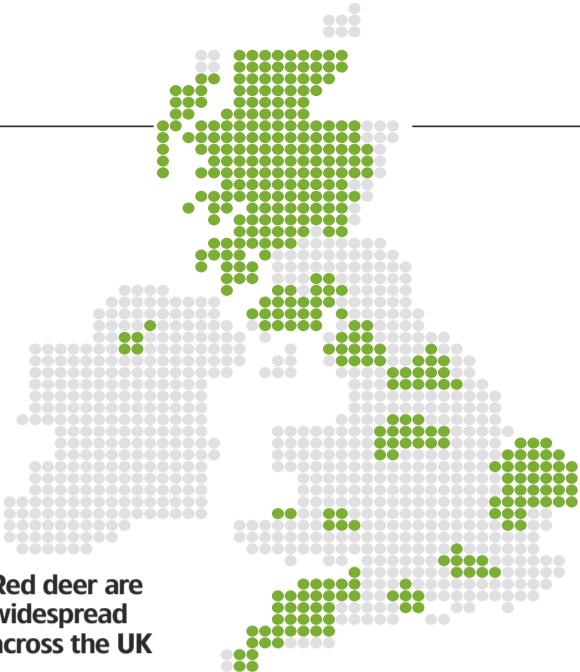
Clothing

If attempting to stalk and photograph truly wild deer outside deer parks, you'll require clothing made out of 'silent fabrics' that are muted in colour. Otherwise, comfortable clothes that are not too bright are ideal.



Lenses

A long telephoto lens around 500mm will allow a safe working distance when photographing red deer. A 70-200mm zoom is also useful to have with you for environmental images.



Red deer are widespread across the UK

About red deer

Red deer are the largest of Britain's six deer species and, along with roe deer, are the only truly native species of deer in the British Isles.

- **Location** Red deer are widespread across the Scottish Highlands and Islands, south-west Scotland, south-west England and south-west Ireland. Smaller scattered populations can be found in the north of England, north Midlands, East Anglia and in Wales. They are also found in deer parks throughout the UK.
- **Size** Adults vary from 110-140cm tall at the shoulder and weigh 65-190kg. Males are larger than females.
- **Diet** Grasses, heather, bilberries, dwarf shrubs, tree shoots and bark, as well as seaweed in coastal areas.
- **Rut** Breeding season occurs each year from late September to November.
- **Population** Approximately 350,000.



Andrew Mason

Andrew Mason is a full-time professional nature photographer. His work is widely published and has been used in books, magazines and calendars, and by corporate and government clients among others. www.andrewmasonphotography.co.uk

RED DEER are active throughout the day and night, with peak activity around dawn and dusk. Adult males and females form separate groups for most of the year, but come together during the annual rut. Only adult males have antlers, which grow each year at the start of spring and are shed at the end of winter.

Habitat

The greatest numbers of red deer are found on the open moorlands and hills of the Scottish Highlands and Islands. They can also be found in treeless areas in the north and south-west of England, as well as parts of Ireland. Elsewhere in the British Isles they can be found in woodland and farmland fringes, heathland, conifer plantations and deer parks.

Best time to shoot

The two best times for photographing red deer are during the rut in late September to November and during the winter months, particularly when there is snow on the ground. The annual rut is one of the highlights of the wildlife calendar in Britain. During the rut, the stags and hinds come together, with the stags seeking to defend their harems of hinds against competing males for the right to breed. The deers' behaviour during the rut presents many photographic opportunities.

Shooting advice

Fieldcraft

Truly wild red deer are, in most circumstances, incredibly wary of humans. Photographing them requires a very high level of fieldcraft. However, for many centuries they have been kept in deer parks throughout the UK. While still wild, the deer in parks have become accustomed to humans, making it far easier to photograph them.

The rut

During the rut, deer tend to favour certain locations and, once you've identified these, the best time of day and position to photograph from can be established. While photographing a bellowing stag in early-morning mist backlit in golden light is high on most photographers' lists, there are many other images that can be made during the rut. Look for fights between rival stags and experiment with different shutter speeds for these clashes. Stags make excellent silhouettes.

Winter

During the winter months, particularly during periods of prolonged snow (as food becomes more difficult to find), red deer may become less wary of humans in their search for food. They will also come down to lower levels to feed, and may come close to roads in certain moorland areas.

Safety

All red deer, even those in deer parks, are wild animals and should always be treated with the utmost respect and caution.

During the rut, stags are pumped full of testosterone and can be particularly dangerous. Hinds give birth to their calves at the beginning of summer and are highly protective of their offspring.

Red deer have a very acute sense of sight, hearing and smell



Marbled white butterfly

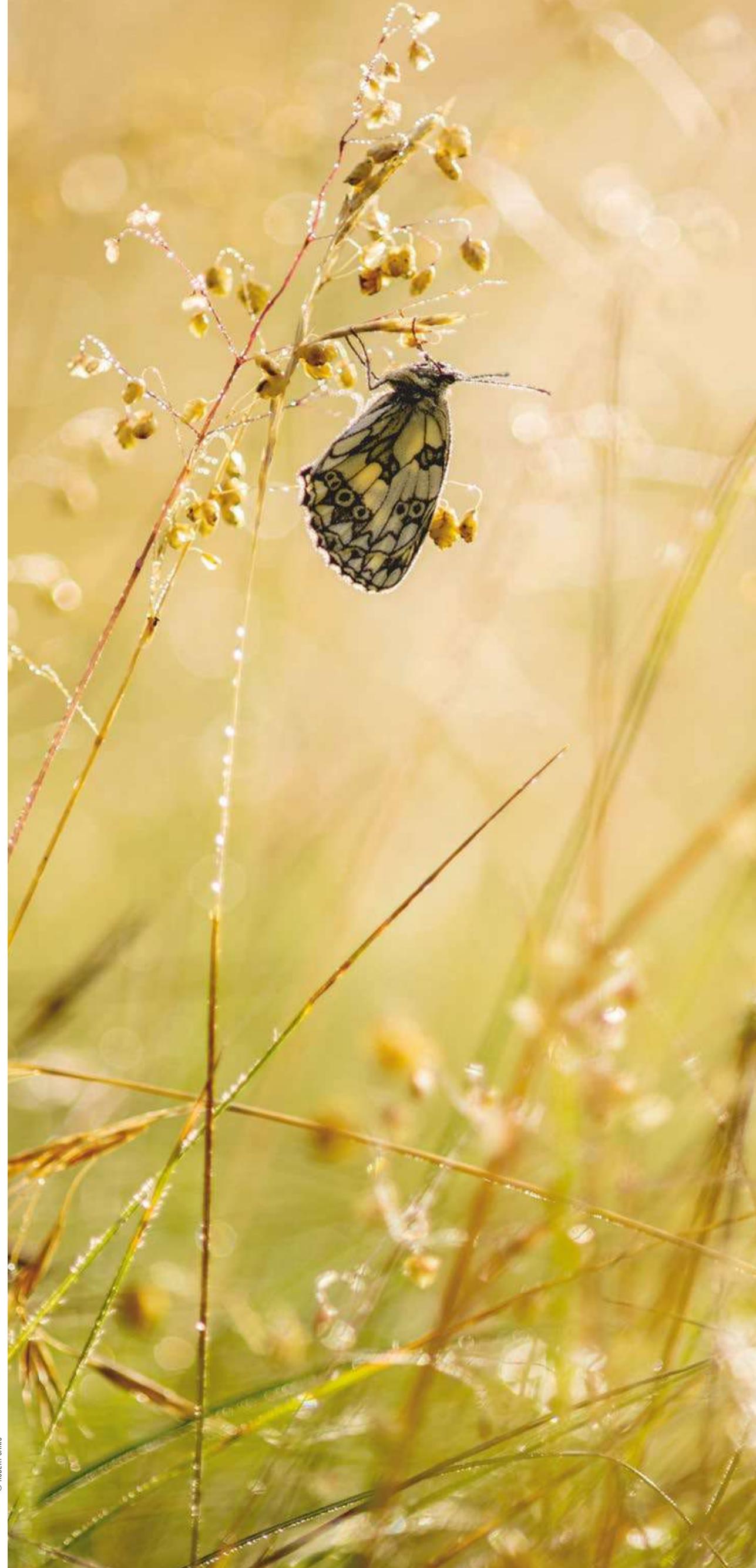
By Robert Canis

Nature photographer **Robert Canis** reveals how he photographed this sun-drenched marbled white butterfly near his home on the North Downs

One of the advantages of working close to home is that I have regular contact with my subjects, so I can visit a location at a moment's notice. In fact, I would estimate that around 80% of my photography is undertaken within a 20-mile radius of where I live, with many of the images taken in the woods, marshes and grasslands where I first cut my teeth as a nature photographer more than 30 years ago.

The story behind this image of a marbled white butterfly is that I had spent most of the day in my office preparing images for my agents and was desperate to get out and stretch my legs. I headed to a favourite grassland site on the North Downs just ten minutes from where I live, where in the previous weeks I had photographed fragrant, bee and man orchids. These were all now well past their best and in their place pyramidal orchids, field scabious and knapweed were in abundance, as were burnet moths and one of my favourite butterflies that is so indicative of the North Downs – the marbled white. It had been a long time since I had photographed this butterfly (I rarely go 'hunting' for butterfly species,

© ROBERT CANIS





The marbled white butterfly is found throughout much of southern England and some areas of South Wales
Nikon D600, 200mm, 1/320sec at f/4, ISO 100, tripod, cable release

EQUIPMENT

ALTHOUGH I use both Nikon DX and FX-format cameras, for close-up photography, I prefer to use a camera with a full-frame sensor. The reason for this is twofold. First, the viewfinder on a full-frame FX camera is generally larger and allows for greater scrutiny of the image (which is also very useful for landscape photography). Second, when using a 200mm micro lens, depth of field is shallower (I need to be physically closer to the subject than with a DX camera), allowing for greater control over those



elements I wish to render in sharp focus. Of course, this can also be a downside, as the closer you are the greater the likelihood of disturbing your subject. That said, when working on roosting insects this isn't much of an issue. Aside from the obvious tripod, the most useful accessory I own and use almost constantly is the right-angle viewing attachment.

It just makes life so much easier and allows me to work in confined areas without having to lie flat on the ground. Frankly, I would rather forget a lens than this.

instead preferring to just happen upon them) and now, with so many present and so close to home, it seemed the perfect opportunity to catch up with them.

With clear skies and still mornings forecast for the next few days, and remembering the 'never put off until tomorrow what you can do today' saying that I religiously abide by in my photography, I knew this would be my best opportunity to photograph these butterflies. For all I knew, strong winds and rain could come along over the next week or two and put paid to all hope of photographing them in such pristine condition.

I chose to photograph the marbled whites from dawn until just after sunrise, and then from late evening to dusk when they would be roosting. At this time they would be easier to get close to and conditions would be more akin to how I wanted to capture them. My photography is strongly biased towards aesthetics rather than producing a mere record that can say very little about the conditions and environment in which I have photographed that subject. I also feel that it's important for me to push myself artistically as much as, if not more than, technically.

As I had planned to get up at 3.30am, I prepared everything the previous evening, right down to water bottle, bagel and keys placed next to the door! I know what I'm like, and several times I have forgotten a snack or a bottle of water. It may not be the end of the world, granted, but at that time of the morning it's not very nice arriving hungry and knowing that you still have a couple of hours to go before breakfast. With such warm days and chilly, still nights, I knew that the grassland would be soaked in dew, so prior to leaving I put on my waterproof trousers and wellingtons. Preparation such as this makes life easier when you are leaving so early.

When I arrived, a low mist hugged the hills and spiders' webs festooned in dew linked the grass stems. It was a beautiful

'My photography is strongly biased towards aesthetics rather than producing a mere record'

sight and one which, over the course of this summer, has been rare indeed. Through bleary eyes I began searching for the marbled whites – which took all of 30 seconds! I saw them on the heads of scabious and knapweed, high up on grass stems and on ground-hugging vetch.

Given the density of the grass and lack of space in which to set up (I avoid flattening areas of vegetation as much as possible and it annoys me no end when I see other photographers sprawled out in such places), I ignored these and headed uphill to where I had seen them the previous day. I located a stunning dew-laden marbled white on a knapweed stem that I worked on until just after the sun appeared above the horizon.

Quite satisfied with what I had obtained, I began to walk away. Then, just 50 metres from the car, I spotted this butterfly, which, due to its positioning, I hadn't noticed earlier. I could immediately see the potential of the image as it was just how I envisaged portraying these butterflies when I first set out. In a flash, all those images I'd taken earlier were sent to the back of my mind and the camera, for the final time that morning, was brought back out of the bag.

AP



Robert Canis

Robert Canis has been a professional nature photographer for more than 20 years. He is represented by several international agencies and regularly leads workshops and overseas tours. Visit www.robertcanis.com

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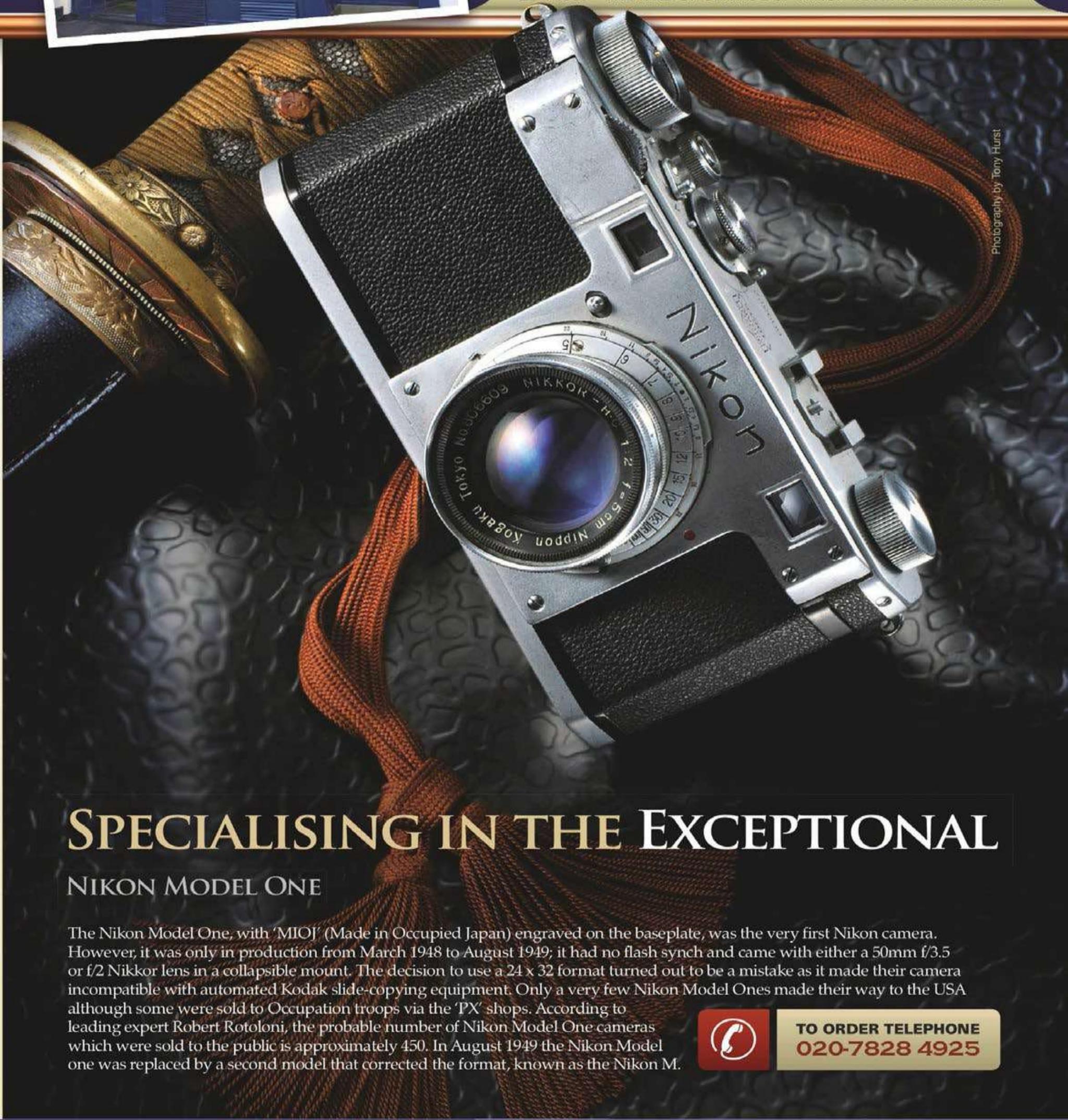
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Photography by Tony Hurst



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The Nikon Model One, with 'MIOJ' (Made in Occupied Japan) engraved on the baseplate, was the very first Nikon camera. However, it was only in production from March 1948 to August 1949; it had no flash sync and came with either a 50mm f/3.5 or f/2 Nikkor lens in a collapsible mount. The decision to use a 24 x 32 format turned out to be a mistake as it made their camera incompatible with automated Kodak slide-copying equipment. Only a very few Nikon Model Ones made their way to the USA although some were sold to Occupation troops via the 'PX' shops. According to leading expert Robert Rotoloni, the probable number of Nikon Model One cameras which were sold to the public is approximately 450. In August 1949 the Nikon Model one was replaced by a second model that corrected the format, known as the Nikon M.



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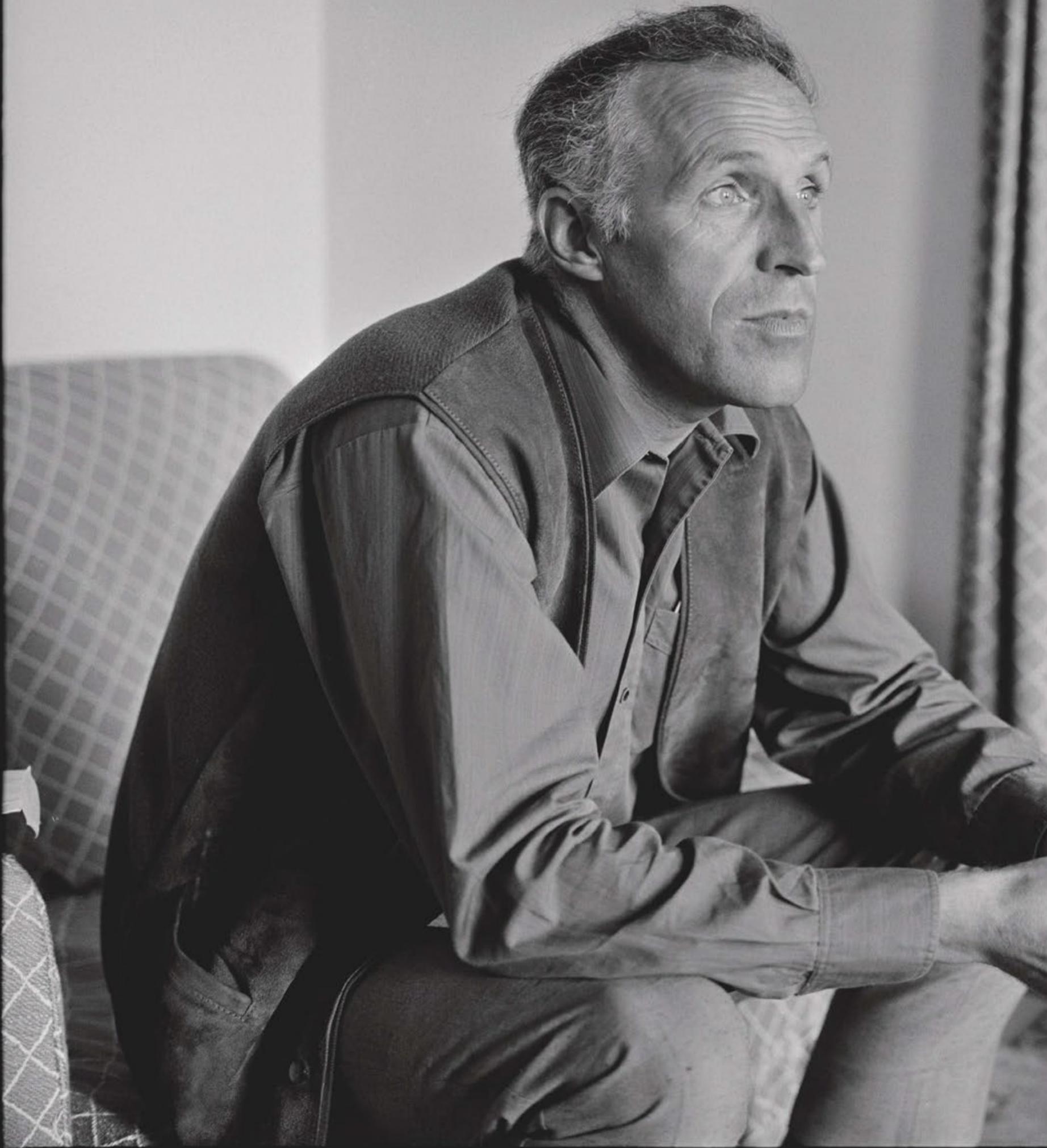


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Bruce Forsyth, 1967

This portrait of the British entertainer and presenter was taken during a time when he was fronting the popular ITV variety programme *The Bruce Forsyth Show*. In the past, Bruce has singled this out as his favourite portrait of himself.





Years and years

The **TV Times** magazine is 60 years old this month and is celebrating the occasion with an exhibition of some classic images from its archives

We recently took a look at the rediscovered photographic archive of listings guide *TV Times* that had been found at the British Film Institute after approximately 50 years (AP 23 May and AP 1 August). The collection contained an incredible array of images featuring some of the biggest stars of music, film and television, such as Kate Bush, The Beatles, Cilla Black and Liza Minnelli. The collection is a goldmine for those interested in

TV entertainers. Now *TV Times* is curating two exhibitions. The first showcases 60 images from 60 years of *TV Times*, and will take place at the Blue Fin Building, Southwark Street, London SE1 OSU from 17 September-18 October. The second exhibition will display rare images of some of the biggest music stars from the 1960s, '70s and '80s. You can see this show at Platform Southwark, London SE1 from 18 September-18 October. Here, we take a look at a small selection from the two exhibitions.





The Rolling Stones, 1965

On 13 January 1965 (although it wasn't televised until 30 January), The Rolling Stones appeared on the hit TV show *Thank Your Lucky Stars*, ITV's answer to the BBC's *Jukebox Jury*, where they performed several songs and were interviewed by presenter Brian Matthew.



Roger Moore, 1968

In 1968, Roger Moore was gracing television screens in his role as Simon Templar, the central character in the mystery spy thriller series *The Saint*. This picture was taken on location during a break between filming scenes.



The Avengers, 1964

In 1964, *The Avengers* completed its third series. Diana Rigg joined the show to replace Honor Blackman for series four (the last to be shot in black & white), who had left to film the James Bond film *Goldfinger*.

Ian McKellen, 1981

The year 1981 proved to be significant for actor Ian McKellen. The year marked his 20th anniversary as a professional actor and he picked up a Tony Award for his role in Peter Shaffer's play *Amadeus*. The production would also go on to pick up the Tony Award for best play.





Quentin Crisp, 1977

English writer and raconteur Quentin Crisp (above) reclines in a chair, flanked on one side by the flag of the USA, his adoptive country, in his New York apartment. This year also saw the US publication of his most well-known work, *The Naked Civil Servant*, although the book had already been published in the UK in 1968.

Michael Caine, 1967

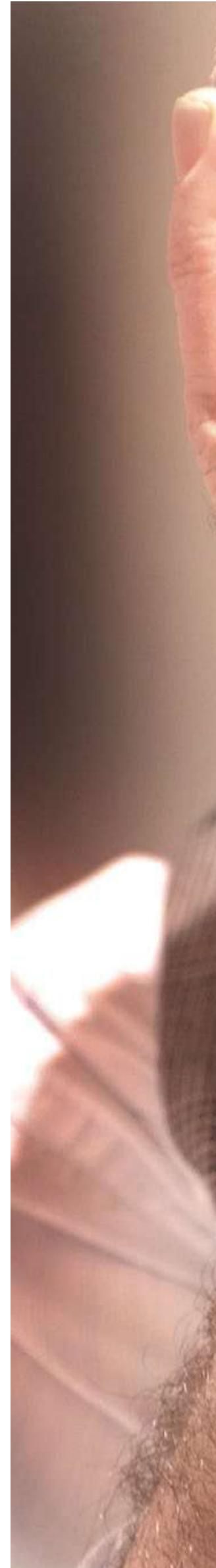
Here we see British actor Michael Caine (below) on the film set of the espionage thriller *Billion Dollar Brain*, filmed in Pinewood, Buckinghamshire. The film was directed by the late Ken Russell, and while it was disliked at the time of its release, it has gone on to be recognised as a firm favourite within the spy and espionage genre.

Bob Hoskins, 2009

In 2009, Bob Hoskins (right) won his one and only Emmy Award for his role in Jimmy McGovern's drama serial *The Street*. Hoskins retired from acting soon after this image was taken. In 2011, he announced he was leaving the profession after he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. He died in 2014.



TV Times 60th Anniversary is open from 17 September-18 October. The indoor part of the exhibition is open Monday-Friday 10am-7pm, but many images will be shown on outdoor plinths, which can be visited any time. The Merge Festival Exhibition (music images from *TV Times*) is open at Platform Southwark, 1 Joan Street, London SE1 from 18 September-18 October. Opening times are Wednesday-Sunday 12pm-7pm. Visit www.mergefestival.co.uk.







Appraisal

Expert advice and tips on improving your photography from **Damien Demolder**

AFTER



By pulling down the midtones in software, we can render the image more compelling

Picture of the week

Utah rocks Eric Begbie Nikon D300, 17-55mm, 1/640sec at f/9, ISO 200

BEFORE



The original image is too light, compressing the tonal differences

I LIKE this shot of Eric's. It's the kind of picture I find quite hard to take myself, and I usually have to spend ages to get anything worthwhile. I suppose the key to success is making sense of all those patterns and shapes, and using the light to explain the size and form of the place.

Eric has used near and far objects to give a real sense of depth, and the bold shapes in the foreground contrast dramatically with the textures we see further in the frame – things get smoother as the distance increases. The far mountain seems to be peering through

the gap in the middle ground, and its pale rock face helps make it stand out in the frame.

What Eric hasn't done so well is getting the exposure right. The image is too light. The difference between the tones has been compressed so we have to work too hard to notice them. Had he dropped the exposure by about a stop, or even pulled down the midtones in software, he would have produced a more compelling result.

It is still a great picture, though, and for his clever composition Eric wins my picture of the week award.



Win!

Send up to six prints, slides or images on CD (include the original files from the camera along with your versions on the CD). Tell us about the pictures and include details of equipment used and exposure settings. Send your images to *Appraisal* at the address on page 18. Enclose an SAE if you want them returned. The picture of the week will receive a year's digital subscription to AP worth £79.99

Submit your images

Please see the 'Send us your pictures' section on page 3 for details or visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

Woman on bus, Chelsea

Dr Richard Stern

Canon EOS 5D, 35mm, 1/500sec at f/8, ISO 400

RICHARD is into street photography and seems to have a good observational eye. I've picked his image as it illustrates a point that impacts a lot of photographers' work. We see something and we shoot away, but when we look at what we've recorded it might not reflect the sensation of what we saw in the first place.

I don't know if Richard had that same feeling, but what he saw was the remarkable lady through the bus window. She looks fabulous and the light has picked out her face perfectly, while her lipstick matches the paint of the bus. And then there is the rest of the picture – the back of two heads, some bright blue plastic, the number and destination of the bus. The fact they are included in the frame suggests that the photographer thought they were important, so we respectfully spend some time trying to determine their place in the visual story. When we take those things away, turn down the exposure a little and crop more tightly, we get the full impact of what caught Richard's eye – an extraordinary lady, in lovely light, looking out of a bus window.



Richard's original image with those distracting elements



The full impact of the woman is clearer in the cropped picture



The 'low-tech filter' look with vignetting and hard contrast takes interest away from the boy



When the effects are lessened your eye is immediately drawn to the boy in the window

At the window, Cuba

David Jacobson

Nikon D90, 18-200mm, 1/60sec at f/8, ISO 250

DAVID has sent me a collection of images he made while in Cuba with his Nikon D90. He says that Havana is stuck in a time warp, so he emulated the 'Lomo look' in Photoshop, using curves and colour shifts to get the style he thought suited the place best.

He has certainly made a good job of recreating that camera-phone filter impression of a low-tech camera, but I find the effect rather takes away from the subject. The first thing I saw was the vignetting, the twisted colours and the hard contrast – all before I saw the boy at the window. When this happens, we know that our photography is getting in the way of the subject, and our technique has become the subject instead of the thing that made us take the picture in the first place.

I appreciate that a bit of vignetting can help direct the viewer's attention to the centre of the frame, but in this case the vignetting is too harsh. In my version I've attempted to undo the effects that David applied, and while it isn't as spectacular as David's, we get to see the boy first. It is actually a very nice shot, and didn't need dressing up as something it wasn't.

Damien Demolder is a photographer, journalist and photographic equipment expert, speaker, judge and educator. He has worked in the photographic publishing industry for 17 years, including 15 years at *Amateur Photographer*. He uses a wide range of equipment, from wooden plate cameras to the latest DSLRs, and is a great fan of all products that make good photography more accessible to more people

Accessories

Useful gadgets to enhance your photography, from phones to filters...

HoldFast MoneyMaker

£165 • www.holdfastgear.com

The MoneyMaker is a stylish camera harness, but is it the ultimate solution for carrying two cameras? **Michael Topham** finds out

At a glance

- Various leather finishes and colours
- Available in small, medium and large
- D-rings allow a third camera to be carried
- Safety-catch clips included

THERE'S no shortage of camera straps for carrying more than one camera at a time, but the MoneyMaker from HoldFast isn't your average camera harness. Made from high-grade leather with metal buckles and fittings, it has a high-end premium finish to match its stylish looks and is available in no fewer than 12 finishes, including 'water buffalo tan' as illustrated in this review.

Setting up the harness is quick, and after throwing the MoneyMaker over your shoulders, a pair of HoldFast screws are attached via the tripod thread on your camera before they're secured either side via extremely robust metal clips – the same kind of clip used to safely secure sails to sailing boats. The clips are designed to allow cameras to move freely up and down the harness, letting you pull the camera up to your eye. To prevent the release pin from being accidentally pulled and thus avoiding a costly camera set-up crashing to the ground, each clip has a strong nylon safety catch that attaches to the left-side lug of each camera. It's a harness that leaves you with the impression that it has been meticulously thought through, with no expense spared.

Verdict

Having used the MoneyMaker for 12 hours straight at a wedding, I can say it's one of the most comfortable dual camera harnesses I've used and I wouldn't hesitate to recommend it. Balancing a heavy DSLR off each shoulder resulted in no back pain whatsoever, and having a pair of cameras to hand with different focal-length lenses attached prevented many missed opportunities. It's more expensive than the popular Black Rapid Double (DR-1), but it's a price I'd be more than happy to pay to own a stylish, safe and comfortable harness.



**Amateur
Photographer**
Testbench
GOLD
★★★★★

ALSO CONSIDER

Black Rapid Double (DR-1) Dual Camera Harness

£114, www.blackrapid.com

The Black Rapid Double lets you carry two cameras by distributing the weight across both shoulders. Made from ballistic nylon, it features thick foam padding and is available in 'regular' and 'slim' sizes.



Sun-Sniper Double Plus Harness

£114, www.sun-sniper.com

Designed for press, wedding and sports photographers to carry a pair of DSLRs, the Double Plus Harness is also supplied with central straps to carry a compact camera or pair of binoculars.



Op/Tech Utility Camera Sling-Duo

£37, www.optechusa.co.uk

This sling strap from Op/Tech is worn across one shoulder and offers quick access to two cameras. It's designed in a way that allows the cameras to glide up and down the sling without interfering with a camera's tripod connection.





**Amateur
Photographer**
Testbench
Recommended
★★★★★

Vanguard Xcenior 41T

● £249 ● www.vanguardworld.co.uk

EVEN on a short trip a shoulder bag can soon weigh you down, so when travelling long distances a trolley case is the ideal way to transport your kit. Vanguard's latest range, the Xcenior series, comes in a variety of sizes, and I've recently been using the smallest, the Xcenior 41T.

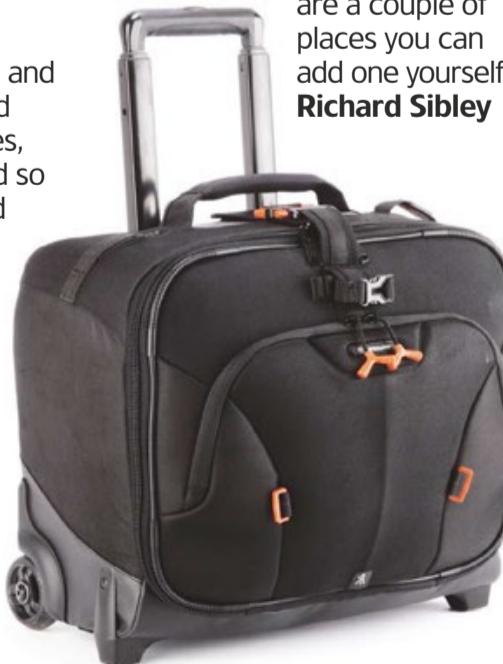
Measuring 430x290x485mm, the case complies with the cabin-luggage policies of most airlines. Although I found it was rather a snug fit in one airline's measuring frame at check-in, I still had no problems with it being allowed on a European flight. I took a couple of professional-sized camera bodies, plus 24-70mm f/2.8 and 70-200mm f/2.8 lenses, and there was still room for cables, chargers, spare batteries and so on. The case has a dedicated pouch for a 13in laptop, as well as a front compartment with internal pockets.

The Xcenior 41T has some neat touches, such as straps that prevent the front zippered opening (which has the laptop pouch on the rear) falling onto the floor when opened in the upright position. It also has a tripod pouch on the

front. However, most useful is the zippered webbing that prevents anything in the main compartment falling out when the bag is upright or moving around when in transit.

The case also doubles as a standard suitcase, as the internal padding can be removed. I've used it for both photo gear and personal items, and found it to be great for a weekend away. As small trolley cases go, the Vanguard Xcenior 41T is hard to beat. Both the trolley and wheels seem sturdy, and the bag is well padded. The only feature I would add would be a shoulder strap, although there

are a couple of places you can add one yourself.
Richard Sibley



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Former Sri Lankan batsman Mahela Jayawardene puts on an impressive display. I used back-button focusing to keep pin-sharp focus on the players

The lens was paired with a Vanguard VEO AM-264TR monopod to offer some additional support



A shot captured while experimenting with the AF memory recall function





At a glance

- £9,649
- Nikon F mount
- 16 elements in 12 groups
- 9 rounded diaphragm blades
- f/4 maximum aperture
- f/22 minimum aperture
- 4.4m minimum focus distance
- 40.5mm filter size (via rear slip-in filter holder)
- 166x432mm
- 3,810g

Howzat!

We may all dream of owning one, but what's the new **Nikon AF-S Nikkor 600mm f/4E FL ED VR** lens like in the type of sporting environment it's designed for? Curious to find out, **Michael Topham** put it to the test

I like to think of photography as a relaxing and enjoyable pursuit, but right now I'm frustrated and livid about the prospect of having to cancel today's shoot. Early this morning I was expecting to take delivery of the almighty Nikon AF-S Nikkor 600mm f/4E FL ED VR and Nikon D4S, but to my dismay it hasn't arrived and time is running out – in a few hours I'm supposed to be setting up to shoot the quarter finals of the NatWest T20 Blast cricket competition. I then breathe a huge sigh of relief as I get a call from the courier telling me it has arrived. After dashing to the post room in happier spirits, I break the lens out of its custom-fit carry case and mount it to the D4S – finally

I'm good to go, or at least you'd think so. Turning the D4S on reveals a blinking battery symbol on the top-plate indicating there's no charge in the camera whatsoever. Today is clearly not my day.

As I sprint to Waterloo to catch my train with £14,000 worth of camera kit slung over my shoulder, the sheer mass of the lens (all 3,810g of it) is starting to take its toll. I quickly find myself having to revert to carrying the heavy combination upside down by the built-in rotating tripod collar. It's at this moment I'm thankful for the rubberised grip on the underside of the collar handle that makes it feel like it's glued to my hand, and for a bit of extra security I wrap the lens strap around my wrist a

few times to ensure that if anyone does decide to steal it from me, I'm going with it.

Mercifully, I find a mains socket on the train to get some power into the D4S battery and on my journey I get up to speed with some of the key features on the lens by taking a look at the user manual. I'm eager to try out its focus function buttons located midway down the barrel, the memory-recall function and the sport vibration reduction mode.

Jealous onlookers

After what can only be described as a frantic journey, I arrive at the Sussex Cricket County Ground five minutes late and pick up my press pass before setting up beside six

other press photographers who are all shooting with Nikon DSLRs. As I screw my Vanguard monopod into the tripod collar and raise the camera to the action, I become aware of the photographers to the left and right of me glancing at my set-up. 'Is that what I think it is?' one jealous press photographer asks. With no time to chat, I'm straight to work, and since I've had no time to set up the D4S beforehand I find myself customising it in between shots.

With the camera set up, it's time to turn my attention to the lens and I begin by flicking the focus mode to autofocus with manual override (A/M). This is rather similar to the lens's M/A mode, apart from the fact

that it requires the focus ring to be rotated further before autofocus is overridden. However, my main reason for choosing A/M instead of M/A is that it can prevent accidental changes to focus caused by unintended operation of the focus ring.

As I compose my first few shots and instinctively depress the shutter halfway, the lens refuses to focus. My first thought is that I might have a faulty lens, but to my relief it instantly finds focus as soon as I press one of the function buttons on the barrel.

A moment later I head into the D4S menu where I notice the camera has, in fact, been set to focus using the AF-ON button, which I keep enabled. This will allow me to use the back-button focus method to prevent players in the foreground throwing the lens out of focus as they pass in front of it – something that can also be achieved on the lens itself by depressing and holding one of the four focus function buttons.

Taking a closer look at the focus function switch, I notice that it can also be pushed forward from its current AF-ON setting to enter AF-L mode, which is used to lock the focus position of the lens and disable the focus function buttons from operating.

Sensational sharpness

A quick review of my first set of images reveals that the lens is allowing me to shoot very close to the action, and I'm amazed that just a couple of pushes of the magnify button in playback mode are all that's needed to fill the screen with the batsman at the farthest end of the ground. Another quick glance at the side of the lens indicates I have the vibration reduction (VR) switch set to 'normal', which is designed to be effective when shooting stationary subjects. Although I haven't detected any camera shake in my shots – something I've looked to avoid by supporting the lens on a monopod and shooting at 1/800sec – I switch the VR mode over to 'sport', which is designed to be more effective for subjects that move rapidly or unpredictably.

A quick referral to the manual confirms that both normal and sport modes can be used when a camera is mounted on a monopod with no ill effects. While it's hard to trace in such a loud environment, a low-frequency whirr can be detected when the VR is used in quieter surroundings.

As I sling the lens over my shoulder in search of a new location to shoot from, I find myself having to ignore some



To keep the shutter speed fast (1/800sec) and the sensitivity low, the lens was frequently used at its maximum f/4 aperture

heckling from cricket fans insinuating it's not all about size. On the opposite side of the ground the last rays of sun give way to the floodlights, and as I push the sensitivity beyond ISO 1,000 to ensure my shutter speed doesn't fall below 1/800sec, I find myself experimenting with the lens's memory-recall function.

Ensuring the beep on/off switch is enabled and the focus-mode switch is set to its central memory recall setting, I use the AF-ON button on the camera to obtain focus on the batsman before depressing the memory-set button on the opposite side of the barrel. A beep sounds, indicating that the lens has stored the focus distance, and as I pan to my right to capture a quick shot of a catch, I'm able to reacquire the same focus distance I used in my previous shots in an instant with a press of a focus function button. It's a feature that's particularly useful and it can be performed in any focus mode regardless of the position of the focus-mode switch.

At the interval between innings I can't resist loading up a few shots



on my MacBook to see how well the lens is performing and check that I'm satisfied with my results.

An inspection in Lightroom reveals absolutely sensational sharpness in the centre of the frame complemented by an attractive depth of field at its maximum aperture. Users will find the optimum sweet spot around f/8-f/11, but being a sports and wildlife lens where speed is everything, it will undoubtedly see most use wide open. Vignetting in the corners at f/4 isn't offensive, either, offering reassurance that I can use it at its maximum aperture

Barrel switches

THERE are no fewer than five switches on the barrel, which are all located behind the rubberised focus ring. At the top there's the focus-mode switch allowing users to select A/M, M/A and manual-focus modes. Beneath this is the focus-limit switch that has two settings. The full setting uses the entire focus range, whereas the 10m-infinity setting is intended for photographing

subjects at greater distances. In the centre there's the VR switch with three options – off, normal and sport. Below this there's the focus function selection switch with three options – AF-L, memory recall and AF-ON. At the bottom is the beep on/off switch that can be used to enable or mute the 'beep' that sounds during memory set and recall operations.



Switches are located behind the large manual-focus ring



Final thoughts

As I invert the hood and protect the huge front element with the slip-on front lens cap, I take some time to reflect on today's shoot.

The Nikon AF-S Nikkor 600mm f/4E FL ED VR is the most expensive lens I have ever used, and I don't think I'll lay hands on a telephoto lens any better. I'm in awe of its sharpness and results, and the only regret I have is not trying it out with a Nikon APS-C DSLR that would have turned it into a 900mm monster.

Although its price implies it will only ever find its way into the hands of working professionals specialising in sports or wildlife, some lens hire companies have already added it to their books, with Fixation (www.fixationuk.com) charging £90 a day or £355 to hire it for a week. There's the small matter of having to put down a £7,500 deposit (which will be fully refunded upon its safe return), but for those on a specialist assignment or a once-in-a-lifetime trip it's good to know you can get your hands on it, and for a fraction of cost you'd pay for it outright.

It's not often I say this, but I feel privileged to have used the Nikkor 600mm f/4E FL ED VR – it's a magnificent lens.

AP

This top view clearly illustrates how the lens tapers from front to back

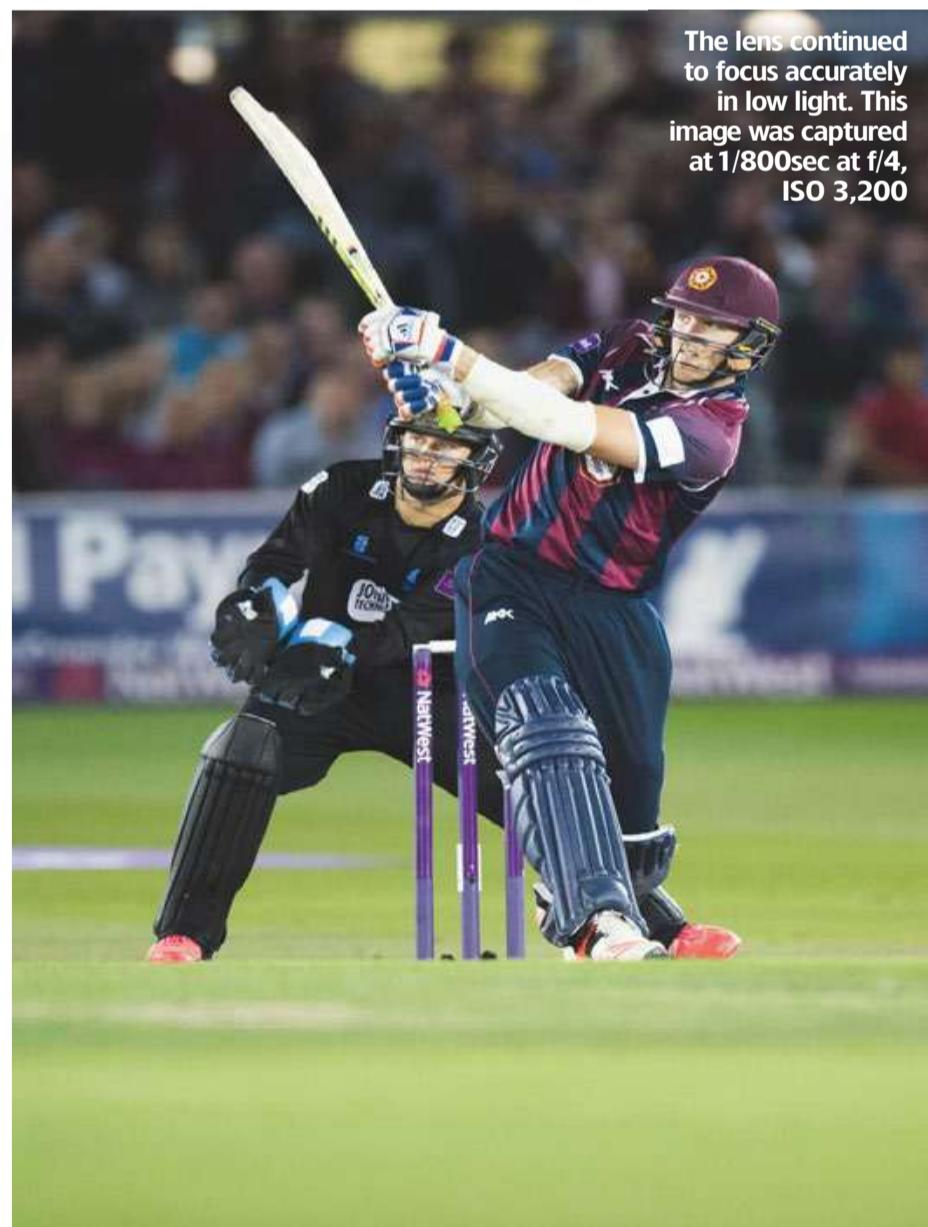


for the remainder of the evening.

As I retreat back to the press area, a few huge hits from a Northamptonshire batsman have me setting up the lens once more. I loosen off the tripod collar ring attachment screw and rotate the body 90° to capture a few shots in portrait orientation. Unlike some collars that notch into place at 90° this one doesn't, so I find myself pulling my eye away from the viewfinder for a split second to line up the white dots on the lens and the collar as a guide. With dark clouds looming I raise the sensitivity in an attempt to freeze the action. The light levels are now much more challenging than when I first

arrived, but the lens is continuing to lock on and find focus instantly. It is performing exceptionally well in such a low-light and challenging sporting environment.

With the result of the cricket now obvious (Northants beat Sussex by seven wickets), I finish by loosening off my monopod to see what the lens is like to use handheld. Three minutes later I'm resting the lens nose on the hood to give my arms a break. There's no denying the 1,250g it sheds from its predecessor makes a huge difference when it's being carried, but for everyday use it's a lens that has to be paired with a monopod to take the weight off.



The lens continued to focus accurately in low light. This image was captured at 1/800sec at f/4, ISO 3,200



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Fuji X	to Leica M	£29.95	Pentax	to M42	£18.95
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Fuji X	to 4/3	£29.95	Sony Alpha	to M42	£15.95
Fuji X	to Canon FD	£29.95	Sony Alpha	to Minolta MD	£44.95
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Nikon	to M42	£24.95	Sony Alpha	to Pentax K	£44.95
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Nikon	to C Mount	£32.95	Sony NEX	to Canon EOS	£29.95
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Nikon 1	to M39	£22.95	Sony NEX	to Sony Alpha	£34.95
Nikon 1	to Nikon	£29.95	Sony NEX	to Olympus OM	£29.95
Nikon 1	to Canon EOS	£44.95	Sony NEX	to Pentax K	£29.95
Nikon 1	to Pentax K	£29.95	Sony NEX	to Leica M	£29.95
Nikon 1	to Leica M	£39.95	Sony NEX	to Leica R	£29.95
Nikon 1	to Leica R	£37.95	Sony NEX	to Canon FD	£42.95
Nikon 1	to Con/Yash	£23.95	Sony NEX	to M39	£23.95
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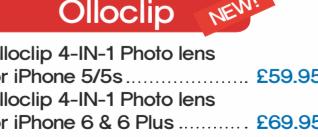
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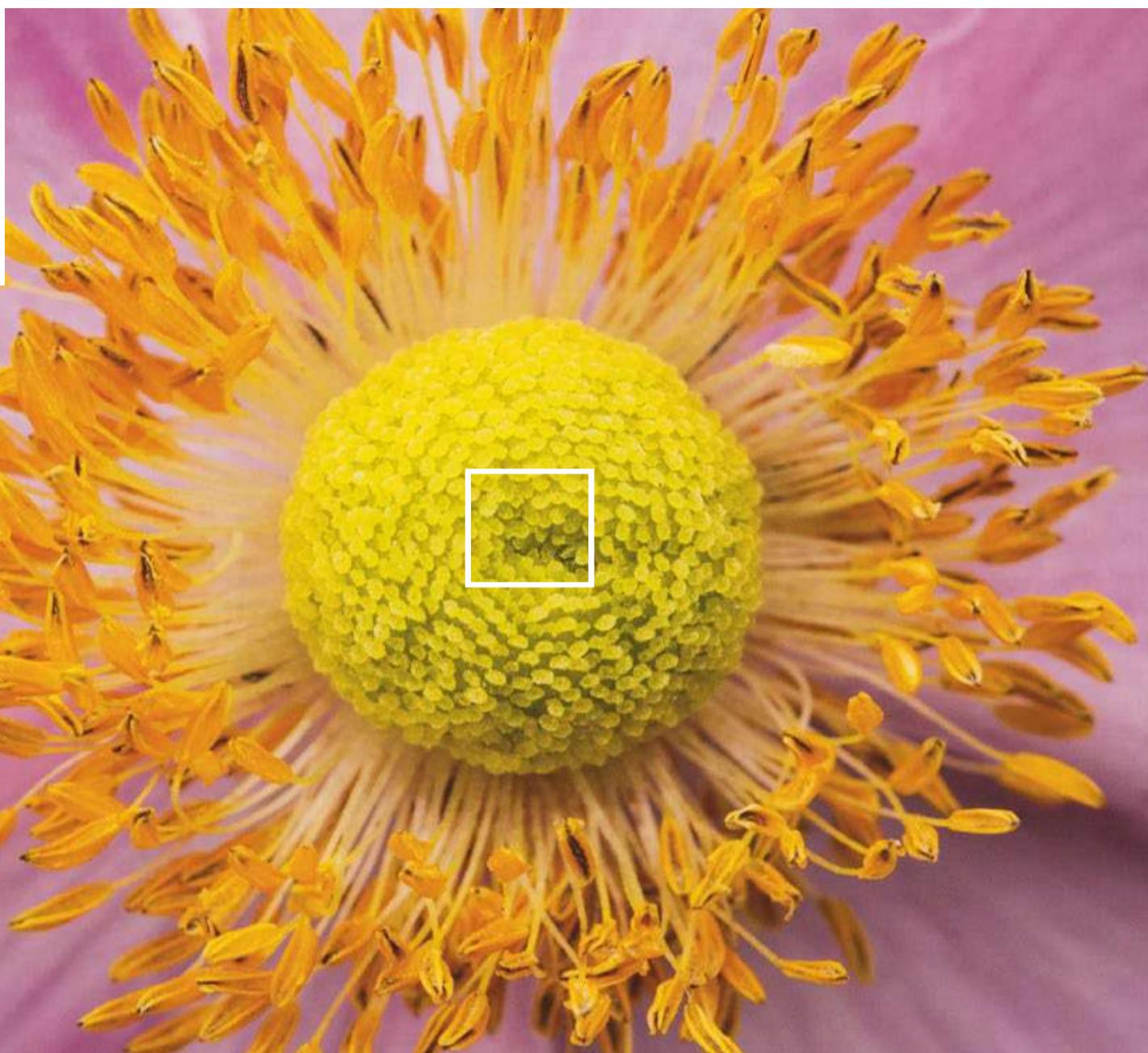
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The Laowa 60mm f/2.8 Macro allows extreme close-up shooting with lots of fine detail

Laowa V-DX 60mm f/2.8 Macro 2:1

Andy Westlake tests a macro lens that promises twice life-size reproduction on a budget

Take a straw poll among all the photographers you know, and there's a chance that none will recognise the brand name Laowa. It's a Chinese company, previously known as Venus Optics, which specialises in close-up photography. As well as the 60mm f/2.8 Macro we're looking at here, it has recently announced a 15mm f/4 lens that offers 1:1 macro and a shift facility when used on APS-C DSLRs. Laowa also makes a macro twin-flash unit to accompany the 60mm macro lens.

Many camera manufacturers offer their own 60mm macro lenses for APS-C-sensor cameras. Taking into account the 1.5x crop

factor, they're effectively equivalent to the classic 90mm macros that were extremely popular with 35mm film, due in part to their ability to double as short telephoto 'portrait' lenses. So it might seem odd that Laowa would choose to make one that's fully manual, with neither autofocus nor automatic aperture control. At £299, it's no cheaper than alternative lenses like the Tamron SP AF 60mm f/2 Di II LD IF Macro, either. So what exactly is the point?

The Laowa's selling point is its maximum magnification ratio – the 2:1 in its name denotes that it's capable of focusing a twice life-size image onto the sensor. So on an

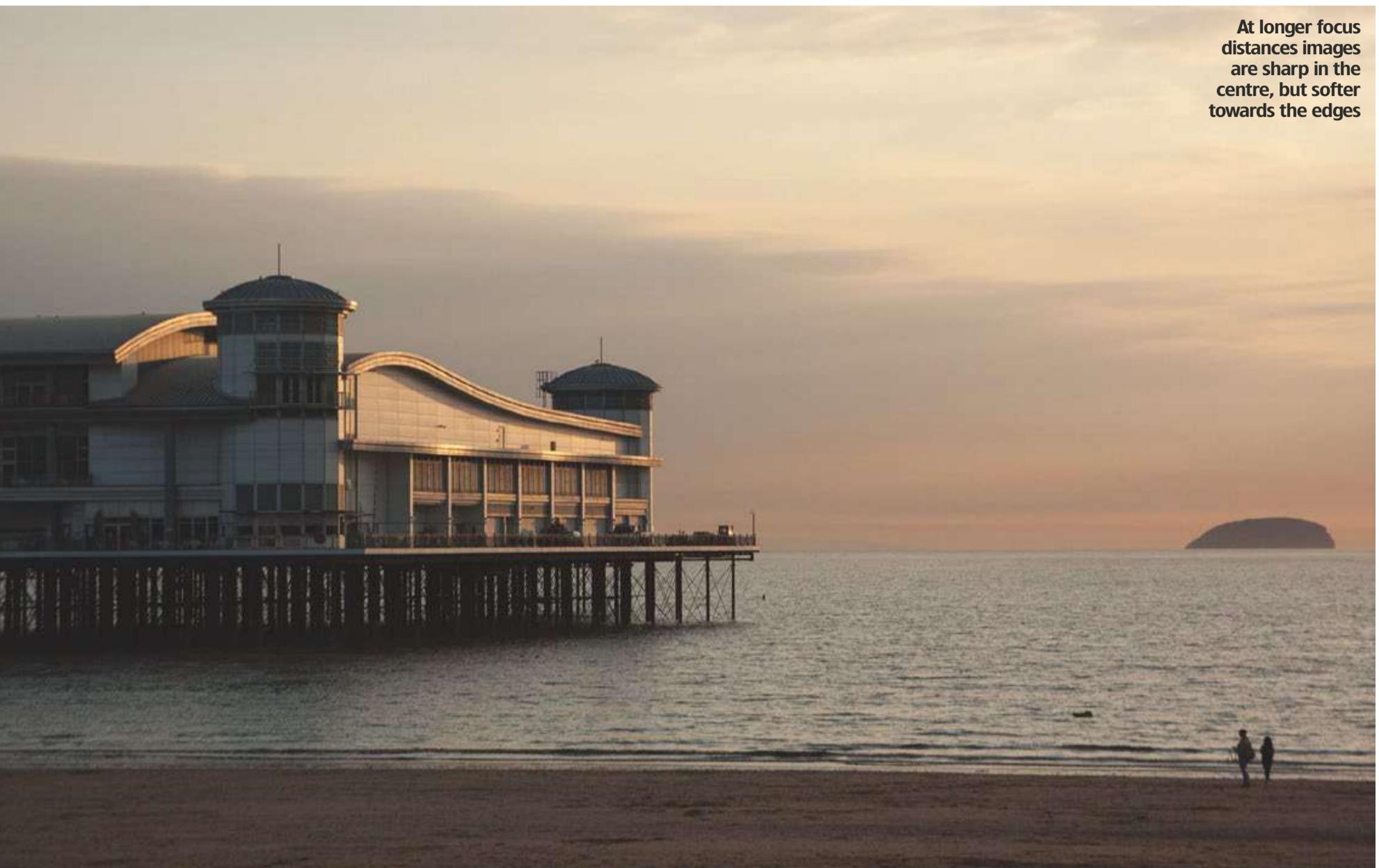


APS-C DSLR with a 23.5x15.6mm sensor, the Laowa can fill the frame with a subject of just 11.8x7.8mm in size. No other DSLR lens can do this without the aid of accessories such as extension tubes, and still focus to infinity.

Features

With its fully manual operation, the Laowa 60mm f/2.8 is basically a very simple

At longer focus distances images are sharp in the centre, but softer towards the edges



► lens. Optically, it consists of nine elements in seven groups, with no suggestion of any exotic glass or aspherics being employed. However, it does use a floating-focus system, with two major lens groups moving separately as the focus is adjusted to give improved image



Out-of-focus backgrounds are rendered very attractively, with smoothly blurred edges

quality across the full range of subject distances. The front element is deeply recessed in the barrel when the lens is set to infinity, which in effect provides a large built-in hood, and moves forward by more than 5cm at the closest focus position.

The front of the barrel is threaded for 62mm filters, which won't rotate on focusing. A 14-blade diaphragm forms the aperture, giving a near-perfectly circular opening at settings right down to f/11. This results in particularly attractive bokeh (the rendition of out-of-focus regions of an image) across the full range of apertures, and is particularly desirable for a lens that will often be used for applications where depth of field will be limited.

The lens is available in the four current major SLR mounts – Canon EF, Nikon F, Pentax K and Sony Alpha. It has no electronics to communicate with the camera, though, which means there's no aperture display or electronic focus confirmation (at least not on the Canon-mount model I tested). This has knock-on effects for how you end up shooting with the lens, which will vary somewhat between camera brands. For example, entry-level Nikon DSLRs will only shoot in manual-exposure mode, and refuse to meter at all. However, it also means that the Laowa 60mm is perfectly at home when used on compact system cameras via a mount adapter – indeed, in many ways it works better when used in this way.

Build and handling

It's difficult to fault Laowa's build quality; with an all-metal barrel, the lens is distinctly reminiscent of classic manual focus primes from the 1970s. The broad manual focus ring rotates smoothly 150° from one extreme of the focus range to the other, with distance markings in feet and metres alongside a macro reproduction scale. Behind it, closer to the camera body, is an aperture ring that clicks at full-stop intervals between f/8 and the minimum setting for f/22. The last three marked stops – f/11, f/16 and f/22 – are rather closely spaced, but at larger apertures it's very easy to set intermediate apertures between the clicks. Turning the aperture ring operates the diaphragm directly, stopping the lens down to the marked setting and darkening the optical viewfinder of a DSLR as a result.

Practical use

When it comes to using the Laowa 60mm, I quickly found that shooting at the extreme magnifications it can achieve is fraught with problems. It's hard enough working with a conventional 1:1 macro lens, where the slightest movement of the camera relative to the subject throws out your composition, or focus, or both. Using this 2:1 macro lens on an APS-C camera simply amplifies these problems. If you try shooting handheld, it's near impossible to hold the camera steady enough to compose and focus. This means



The transition from in-focus to out-of-focus regions of the image is handled beautifully. This was at f/2.8

that you'll need to use a tripod at the very least, ideally with a geared head and macro rail for precise composition and focusing. So while you do get extreme macro for just £299, you'll need expensive supporting kit to make the most of it, and if you try to shoot outdoors the slightest breeze will disrupt your work.

Working distances are quite limited, with only about 5cm from the front of the lens to the subject at 2:1. Fortunately, this isn't so short as to cause serious problems with lighting, so you can get away without having to use flash. But you do risk scaring off skittish wildlife, should you attempt to approach that close.

This type of all-manual lens isn't well suited for use with the optical viewfinders of DSLRs, either. Focusing can be hit-and-miss, and the camera's metering and autoexposure are liable to get increasingly inaccurate as the lens is stopped down. Instead, the lens is best used in live view, or mounted on a CSC with an electronic viewfinder. This allows accurate focusing and metering with the minimum of fuss. As always, it's best to focus first with the aperture set to f/2.8 or f/4, then stop down to the aperture needed for the depth of field you wish to achieve.

Image quality

Looking at images from the Laowa reveal that it's anything but a clinically sharp modern lens. Wide-open images are rather soft in the centre of the frame, and decidedly blurred towards the edges and corners. Things improve on stopping down, but it's not until f/11 that the periphery of the frame cleans up completely. However, this does not mean that the lens creates unattractive images, and the Laowa scores strongly in how it renders out-of-focus images of the frame, with delightfully smooth and attractive bokeh. If you're after pin-sharp corner-to-corner detail in large prints, though, you'll be better off with a conventional macro lens.

AP

Our verdict

WHEN buying photo gear, it's naturally tempting to play it safe, research your purchases and buy the best lenses you can afford. But as conventional wisdom tends to equate 'best' with 'sharpest', this means it's easy to overlook lenses like the Laowa 60mm f/2.8 Macro. It's a lens that's full of character, and its ability to shoot twice life-size macro opens up a whole new way of exploring the world.

This isn't the lens to buy, though, if you're after an easy life. With manual focus and aperture operation it requires some work and dedication to get the best out of it, and it's not a great choice if you like to shoot using the optical viewfinder of a DSLR. I suspect most photographers would be better served by the

Tamron 60mm f/2 Macro, especially if looking for a dual-purpose portrait/macro lens, but the Laowa is an intriguing alternative.



Data file

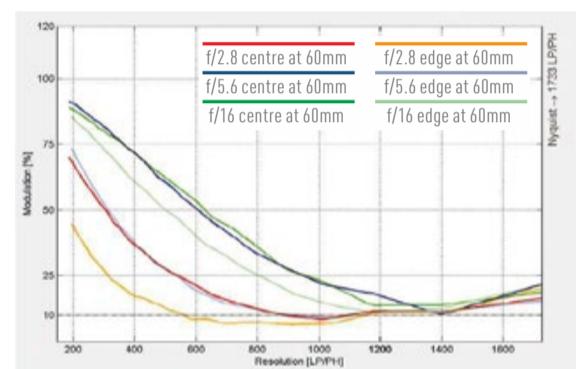
Price	£299
Filter diameter	62mm
Lens elements	9
Groups	7
Diaphragm blades	14
Aperture	f/2.8-22
Minimum focus	18.5cm
Length	95mm
Diameter	70mm
Weight	503g
Lens mounts	Canon EF, Nikon F, Pentax K, Sony A

**Amateur
Photographer**
Testbench
★★★☆

Laowa V-DX 60mm f/2.8 Macro 2:1

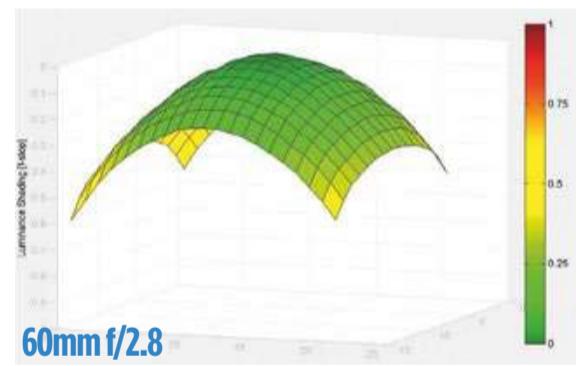
Resolution

Our Applied Imaging MTF tests reveal the lens to be extremely soft wide open. It improves considerably on stopping down, and the centre is impressively sharp by f/5.6. The optimum apertures for overall corner-to-corner sharpness are f/8-11, with diffraction softening the image a little at f/16.



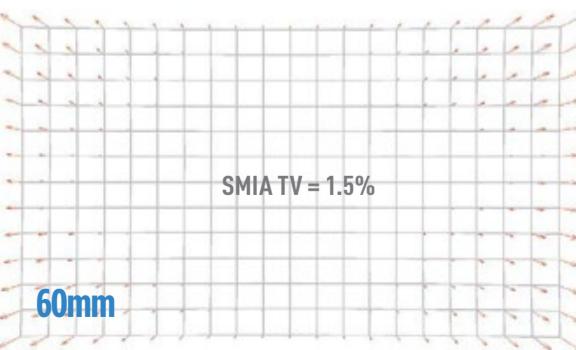
Shading

A little corner shading is visible on APS-C cameras at f/2.8, but it's rarely visually troubling, and it effectively disappears completely on stopping down to f/5.6. Not surprisingly, if you mount the lens on a full-frame camera then shading becomes much stronger, particularly at longer focus distances.



Curvilinear distortion

Moderately strong pincushion distortion is visible in our test-chart shots. This is a little disappointing from a macro lens, which we'd usually expect to be near-perfectly corrected. Our tests were shot at a distance of around 2m, but a similar pattern exists at all distances from infinity to minimum focus.



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Flash compatibility

Q I bought a Minolta Program 3600HS flashgun for use with my semi-retired Minolta Dimage 7 and Konica Minolta Dimage A200 cameras, but could you tell me whether this flashgun is compatible with any other range of cameras or whether adapters are available for other systems?

Keith Jones

A When Konica Minolta withdrew from the photo business in 2006, its camera division was taken over by Sony, which continued to use the same hotshoe design until late 2012. This means that your flash unit will fit directly onto a wide range of older Sony cameras, including all its DSLRs, many of its SLR-like single-lens translucent models (which have interchangeable lenses and an electronic viewfinder) and the NEX-7 compact system camera. If you're prepared to buy second-hand, there's a range of options.

Since 2012, Sony has switched to using an ISO-standard hotshoe, which is found on its current models. However, you can buy the Sony ADP-MAA shoe adapter that would allow the use of your Minolta flash unit on newer Sony cameras, for £24.99. The most similar model to your Minolta Dimage is the Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX10,

which has a 24-200mm equivalent f/2.8 zoom in an SLR-style body with a large 20.2-million-pixel, 1in sensor for superb image quality, and costs £600. The Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 II is a small compact with 28-100mm equivalent zoom lens and the same sensor, and costs around £400. Finally, the Sony Cyber-shot DSC-HX60 is a small travel-zoom-type camera with an impressive 24-720mm equivalent zoom, but smaller (20.4-million-pixel) sensor, and costs about £200.

Andy Westlake

Proper manual focus

Q Why do all new camera systems use that infernal so-called 'focus-by-wire'? I'd like to ditch my SLR for something smaller, but I like to focus the lens myself at times, like any real photographer. I used a camera with push-button focusing and an SLR with electronic focusing (an Olympus, I think), and both were horrible. Why can't camera makers stick to the good old-fashioned ways that worked?

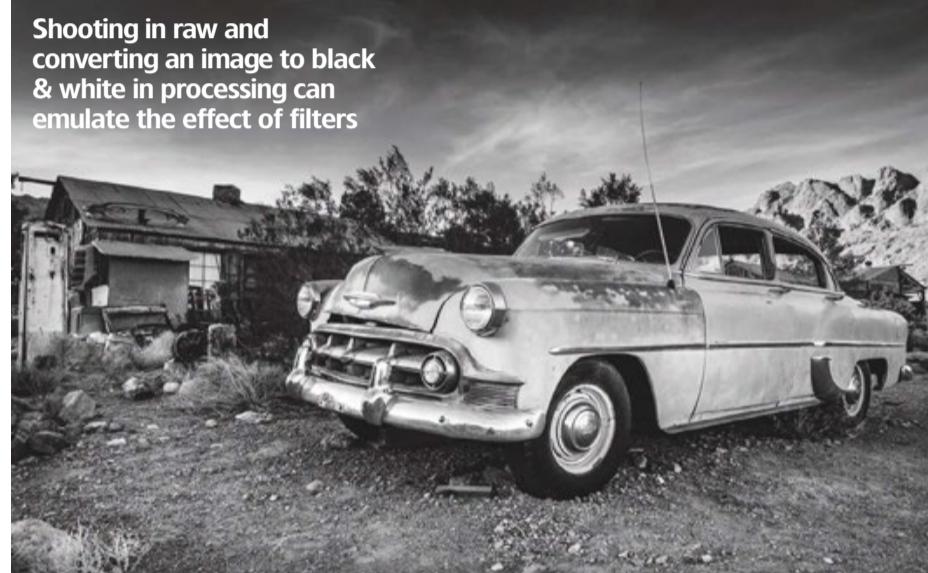
Colin Henderson

A I think we can generally agree that the way cameras were made in the good old days was best, but the world moves on, technology advances and new systems are introduced. Usually they start off not working very well (remember the early AF systems?), but then get progressively better.

Electronic manual focus, or focus-by-wire, is just such a thing. It started to become standard on new all-electronic mounts in the late 1990s, on short-lived systems such as Minolta Vectis

Sony's ADP-MAA allows older flashes to be used on modern Sony cameras

Shooting in raw and converting an image to black & white in processing can emulate the effect of filters



© PHIL HALL

Filters for black & white

Q I have always enjoyed shooting black & white. Back in the day I worked with films like Ilford Delta and I'd often use an orange filter on my lenses. Now I've discovered that I can set my camera to work on black & white, so can I use filters in the same way? Some of my photographer friends say it doesn't work, but I can't see why not. Surely it's recording the light in just the same way. Who is correct?

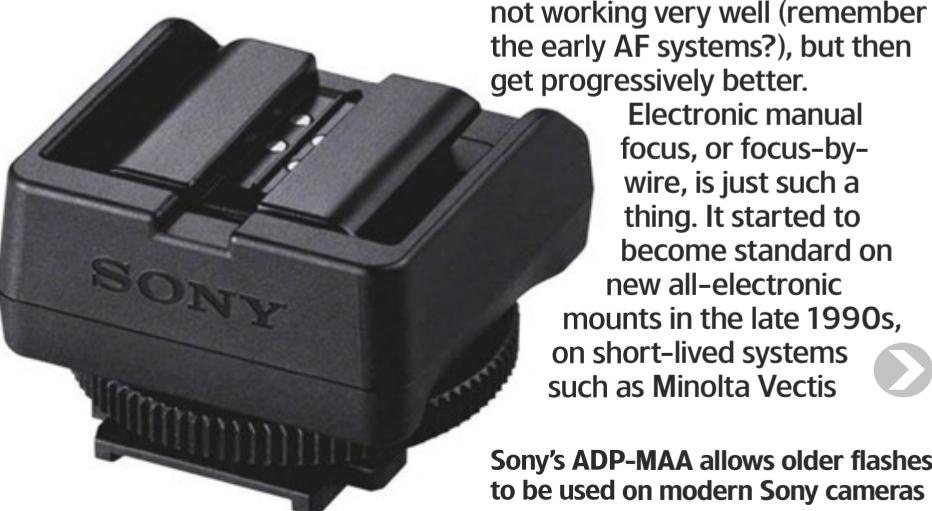
Peter Shipton

A This is one of those questions that doesn't have a completely straightforward answer. First, the sensor doesn't react to light in exactly the same way as black & white film. When you set the camera to monochrome, it's still recording a colour image but converting it to black & white in-camera. However, if the camera is set to auto white balance, it will first go out of its way to 'correct' the effects of the filter before making the monochrome image. This is why coloured filters often don't seem to work on digital cameras.

On the other hand, if you first set the camera to a specific white balance, usually daylight, then coloured filters should have more or less the desired effect on the pictures made by your camera. This only really matters, though, if you're shooting JPEG. If you use raw and convert your pictures to black & white in post-processing, then you can do much the same thing in software, but starting from unfiltered full-colour pictures. The key advantage here is that you can choose the filter effect that best suits the picture after shooting, rather than having to choose the filter before you start. You can even apply filter effects selectively to different areas of the frame.

Certain cameras can use the colour information recorded by the sensor to emulate the effects of different lens filters – yellow, green, red and so on – in their black & white JPEG output. A few even allow you to apply these effects to pictures after you've taken them, if you're shooting raw. So if you have a camera that can do this, there's little need to use lens filters.

Andy Westlake



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Technical Support

and Contax G. It was used by Olympus and Panasonic on Four Thirds DSLRs, too, and frankly was pretty horrible, to the extent that the last few lenses developed for that system used ring-type ultrasonic motors.

Since then, though, things have changed considerably. Manufacturers have worked hard to improve the responsiveness and feel of their systems, with varying degrees of success, and the best now work very well indeed. In particular, Fujifilm, Olympus and Sony now all make some lenses with push-pull focus rings that, in manual mode, have distance scales and hard end stops just like traditional lenses. They do a fantastic job of mimicking the old manual-focus

experience, but with one key difference – the focusing aids on modern cameras allow much more accurate focusing than ever before.

Andy Westlake

Spare battery for D800

Q So far I've managed without a spare battery for my Nikon D800, but I'd like to take one on our holiday to the Antipodes as a precaution. I hope I can buy a third-party battery that will be satisfactory, but less expensive than Nikon's EN-EL15. Do you have any recommendations?

Chris Newman



Ansmann is one company that sells high-quality batteries

A While there's a case for sticking with genuine Nikon batteries, and in particular avoiding cheap third-party replacements, there's a middle ground of high-quality alternatives from reputable brands that do cost less. I'd suggest looking at Ansmann or Hähnel, both of which make EN-EL15 clones for around £40.

Andy Westlake



BLAST FROM THE PAST

Sony Mavica MVC-CD500

Ian Burley looks at a recordable CD camera from 2003

LAUNCHED February 2003

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GUIDE PRICE TODAY £15

SONY'S Mavica range began in 1981, when the company produced the first commercial video stills camera. The name Mavica is derived from Magnetic Video Camera, and film video stills were recorded onto a 2in proprietary Mavipak floppy disk.

Fast forward 22 years to when Sony launched the Mavica MVC-CD500 as the latest in a line of recordable CD cameras, which were now fully digital. The MVC-CD500 had a 5-million-pixel sensor, a 7-21mm (34-102mm equivalent) 3x zoom lens and 2.5in LCD screen.

What's good The MVC-CD500 produced pleasing, if oversaturated, colours and relatively low-noise performance. For its time, the 5-million-pixel sensor was above average. As the camera design needed to house 8cm recordable CD media, there was plenty of space for a well-sized LCD screen.

What's bad Even though it doesn't take full-sized CDs, the camera is enormous and bulky. A complaint of overall camera fragility is also worth considering when buying a used example.

HOW IT WORKS

I am your

Scene-recognition mode

I WAS only invented relatively recently, but I have radically advanced the cause of camera automation. I am an automatic intelligent scene-recognition mode, not to be confused with manual user-selectable scene modes.

Scene recognition was brought to the fore thanks to live-view cameras, starting with compact digital cameras. Canon and Panasonic, in particular, developed cameras with so-called intelligent auto (iAuto) modes from 2006 onwards. With live view, the camera's sensor gets a constant view of what it's being pointed at which can be analysed by the camera's image processor.

Scene recognition is at the heart of a true iAuto mode. The camera will evaluate the brightness of the scene, the distance to the focused subject and the white balance, and will attempt to identify what you're photographing from what it looks like. Face detection had already achieved this by looking for an ovoid shape with dark areas where your eyes and mouth should be. This was later

refined to face recognition, which can remember the faces of different individuals. But scene recognition goes further by being able to understand and recognise dozens of commonly photographed scenes, from landscapes and portraits to macro shots and night photography. By recognising the scene, the camera can invoke appropriate exposure and effects settings automatically. For example, some cameras can even detect movement in the scene and alter the ISO sensitivity in response, forcing a faster shutter speed to better freeze the action.

While scene recognition was initially exclusive to compact cameras, live-view DSLRs later appeared with scene-recognition modes. At first, these only worked if you were using live-view mode. But Nikon realised that its 1,005-segment RGB exposure sensor was also up to the task of recognising the scene without forcing the camera into live-view mode so the feature was introduced in the Nikon D300 and D3 models in 2007.



Scene recognition automatically detects the type of subject



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In the bag



Portrait and wedding
photographer
Matthew Osborne
reveals some of
the kit he uses.
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Leica M9

1 The Leica M9 is my primary camera body for all types of digital photography. It's a 35mm rangefinder fitted with a Kodak CCD sensor that gives a hybrid filmic look. Its compact size is perfect for unobtrusive wedding photography or travelling for shoots.

Leica Noctilux-M 50mm f/1 v2

2 This is the fastest (and biggest!) Leica lens I own and it gives a slightly softer look and unique dreamy bokeh. It's great for portraits and low light, and is best used wide open, but nice and sharp from f/2 onwards if needed. I often use it with an ND filter.

Leica M3

3 The Leica M3 is my main film camera. It's a 1950s rangefinder with 50mm frameline viewfinder. I use two M3s: one loaded with black & white film and one with colour. My preferred focal length is 50mm, so the M3's 50mm viewfinder is usually perfect.



Leica Summicron-M 50mm f/2 DR lens (with close-focus goggles)

4 This lens is a perfect match for the M3 – sharp when wide open with nice rendering. The closest focus distance is 1m without goggles and 0.48m with. This is closer than the standard 0.7m closest focal distance, so it's great for when I want to get nearer.

35mm film

5 I use Kodak Portra 160 and 400 for colour film photography and especially film wedding photography. For black & white my current preference is Ilford Delta 100, but I also use Fujifilm Neopan Acros and Kodak T-Max. I develop my own black & white in Xtol or Rodinal and use a lab for colour film.

List of other kit Leica M3 (single stroke), Leica M3 (double stroke), Leica M2, Leica M8, Leica M Typ 240 (replaces M9 in photo), Voigtlander Super Wide Heliar 15mm f/4.5, Zeiss Biogon 21mm f/2.8, Zeiss Biogon T* 25mm f/2.8 ZM, Voigtlander Ultron 28mm f/2, Voigtlander Nokton 35mm f/1.2 Asph II, Voigtlander Nokton 35mm f/1.4, Voigtlander Color-Skopar 35mm f/2.5, Voigtlander Nokton 40mm f/1.4, Leica Noctilux-M 50mm f/1 v2, Leica Summilux-M 50mm f/1.4 Asph, Leica Summarit 50mm f/1.5, Leica Summicron 50mm f/2 v5, Leica Summicron-M 50mm f/2 DR, Leica Elmar-M 50mm f/2.8 collapsible, Zeiss C Sonnar T* 50mm f/1.5, Leica APo-Summicron-M 75mm f/2 Asph, Leica Summicron-M 90mm f/2, Leica Elmar-M 135mm f/4



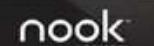
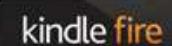
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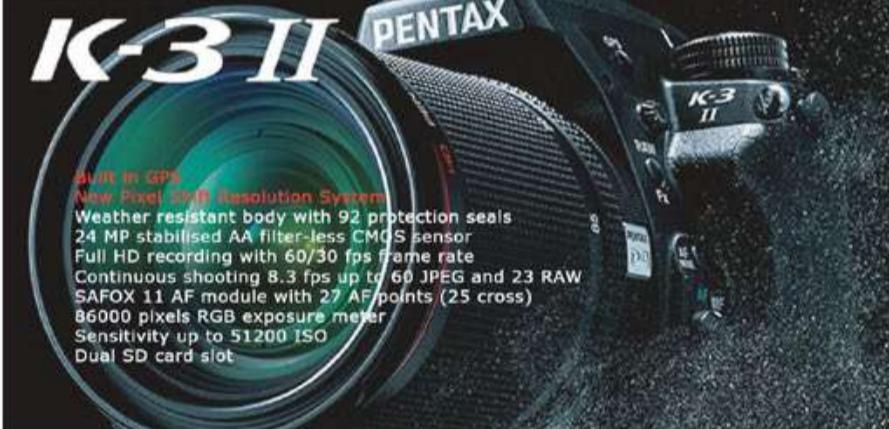


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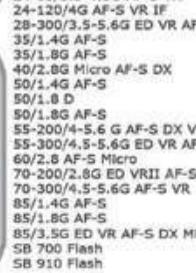


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E: Excellent
G: Good
SAS: Sold As Seen
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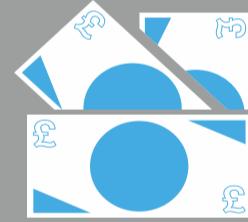
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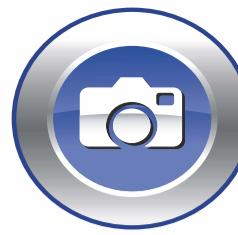
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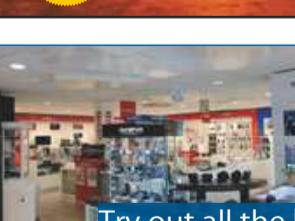


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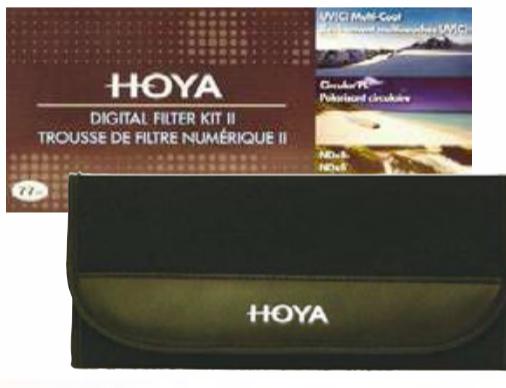
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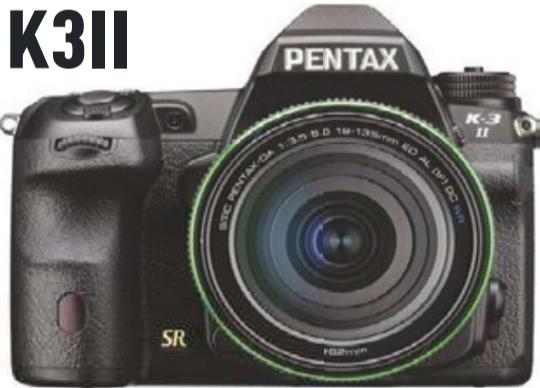
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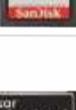
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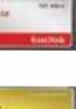
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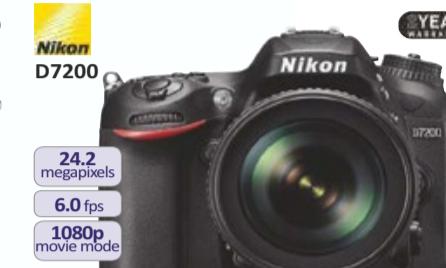
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CUSTOMER REVIEW: EOS 760D Digital SLR Camera Body

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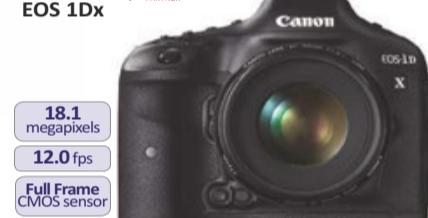
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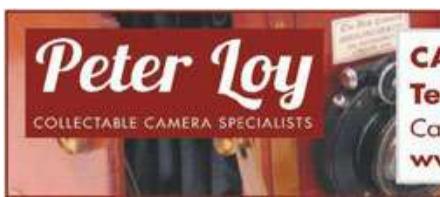
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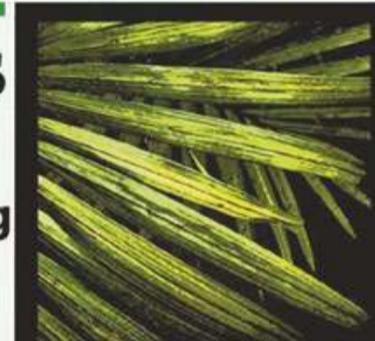
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Final Analysis

Roger Hicks considers...

'Jeddah, Saudi Arabia', 2009, by Olivia Arthur

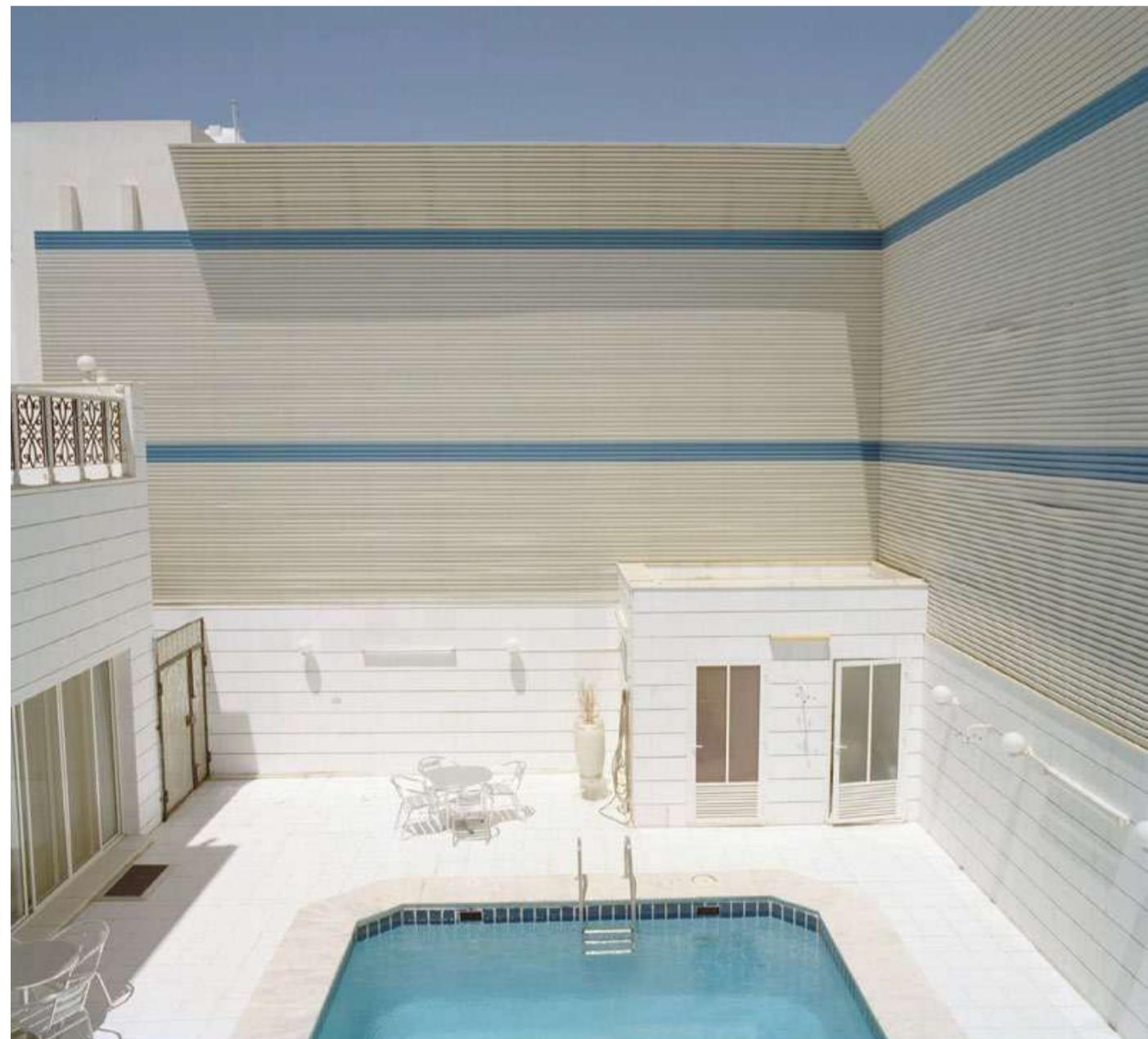
What could be more blissful? Warm sun, blue sky, a swimming pool. But yet, there's no one there. Well, that's OK. No one uses their pool all the time. On the other hand, in a space designed for relaxation, there's a certain expectation that we'll see people relaxing. Why are they absent here?

We all like a bit of privacy. Here, though, privacy appears to have been transformed into obsession or parody. These walls must be at pushing 10 metres high, maybe 30 feet.

The longer we look at the picture, the more strangeness we find. The huge walls don't appear to be walls at all, but screens, and flimsy ones at that: look at the dents and creases. There's something more subtly disquieting, though, and to me the likeliest answer seems to be that we might reasonably expect this picture to be ultra-formal: all verticals truly vertical, all right angles truly perpendicular. This is (fairly) easily achieved via camera movements or an image-manipulation program.

Our expectations are not fulfilled. The picture is slightly 'drunk'. The verticals diverge, the result of a high camera angle, looking down: the classic case for front fall, the opposite of a rising front. This is most noticeable on the left, but we can see it even in the closed door of the little cabin. Perhaps more surprisingly, the edge of the pool is not quite parallel with the bottom of the picture. The result is slightly queasy: a queasiness that reinforces the impression created by the emptiness of the space and those parodic walls.

This may prompt us to ask



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'We can only truly learn by looking hard at others' pictures, and at our own, and then thinking about them'

ourselves further questions. Our reactions may be overly conditioned by the fact that we know we are in Saudi Arabia. We automatically suspect the walls are simply to stop people seeing one another: bathers on the one hand, especially female bathers, and on the other, those who would consider their own

eyes to be polluted by the sight of bathing attire. And a swimming pool in the desert is a symbol of conspicuous consumption. What of the builders, the labourers, who constructed this?

Then there's the photography. The photographer may consciously have chosen the

queasy angles, or it may have been subconscious, but it hardly seems likely that it was incompetence. Besides, she had apparently deliberately emphasised those giant walls. Finally, there's the viewpoint: the omission of half the pool, as though she were peeking over the wall and couldn't see more.

It's easy to glance at a picture and dismiss it. We can only truly learn, though, by looking hard at others' pictures, and at our own, and then thinking about them.

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